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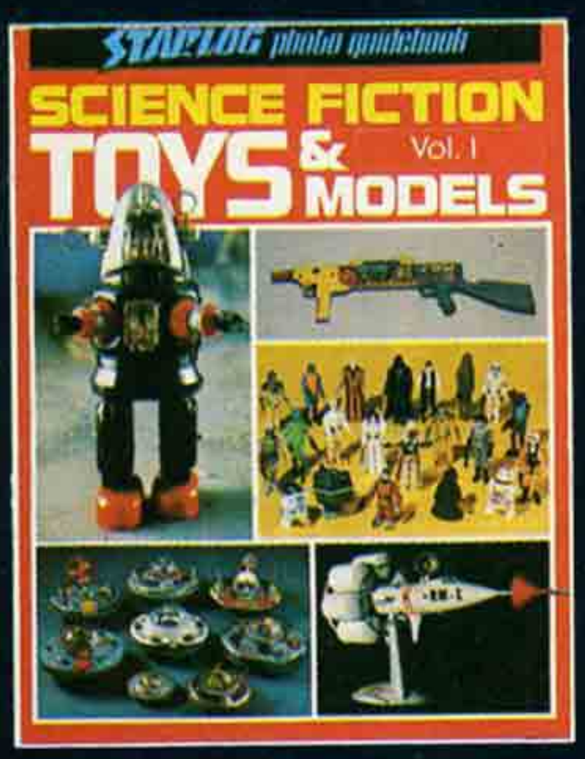

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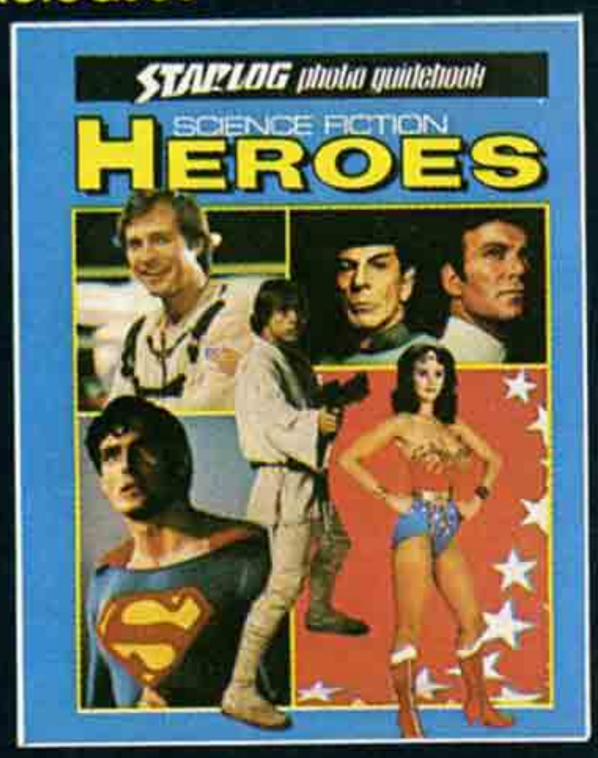

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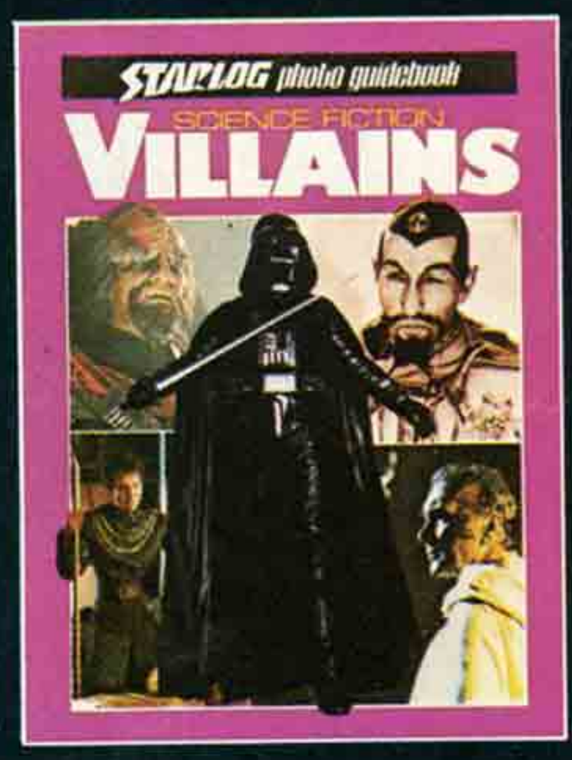

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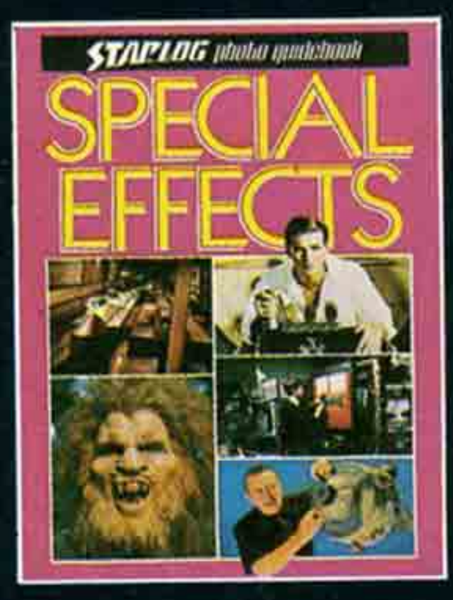

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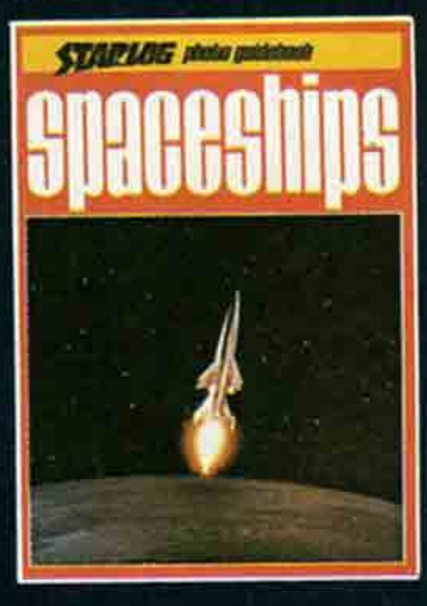

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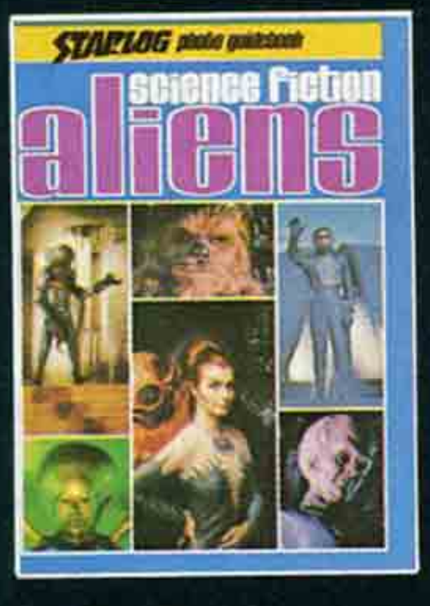

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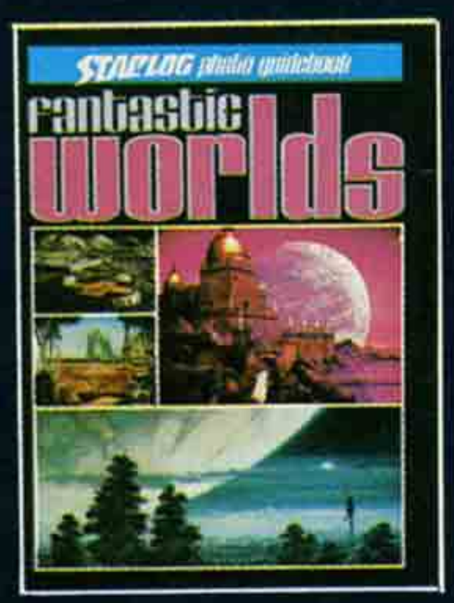

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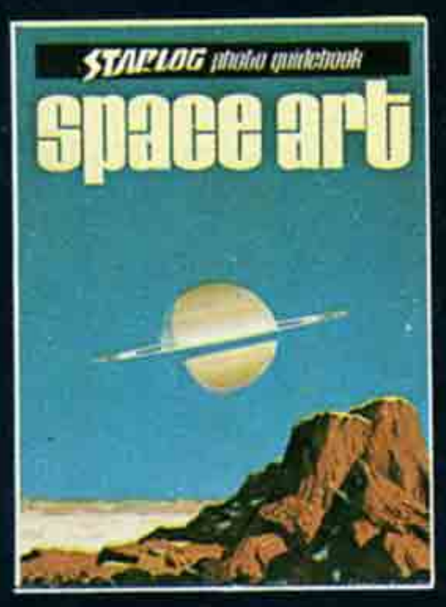

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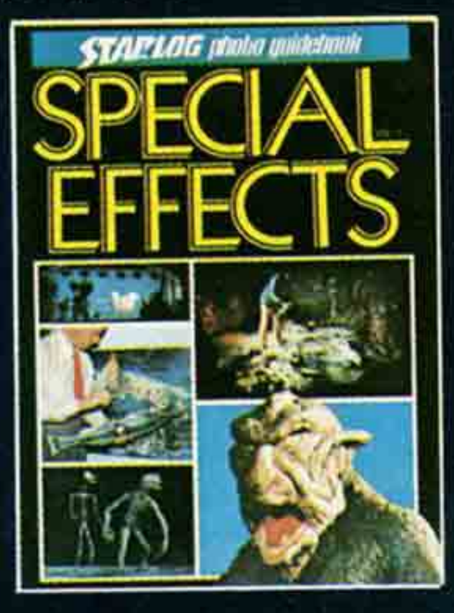

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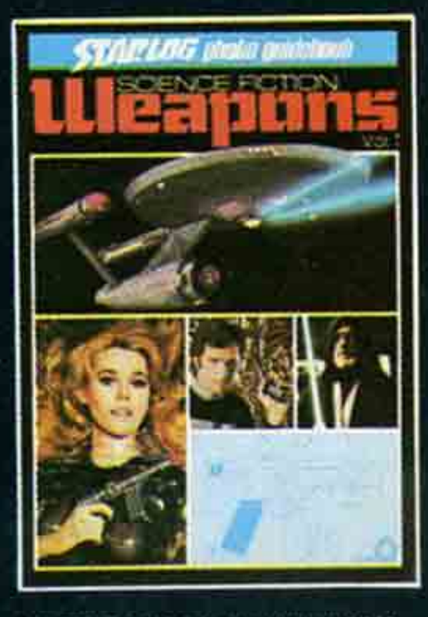

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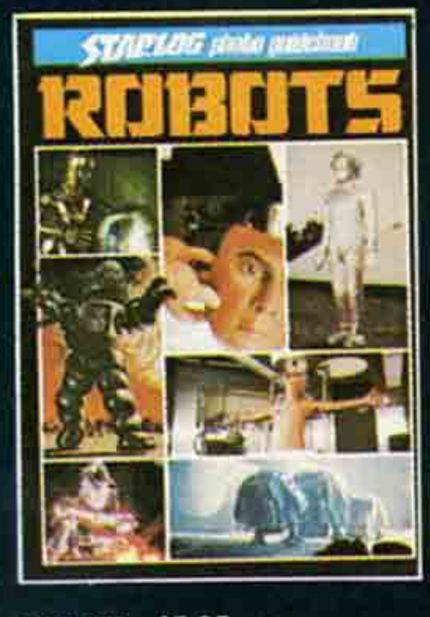

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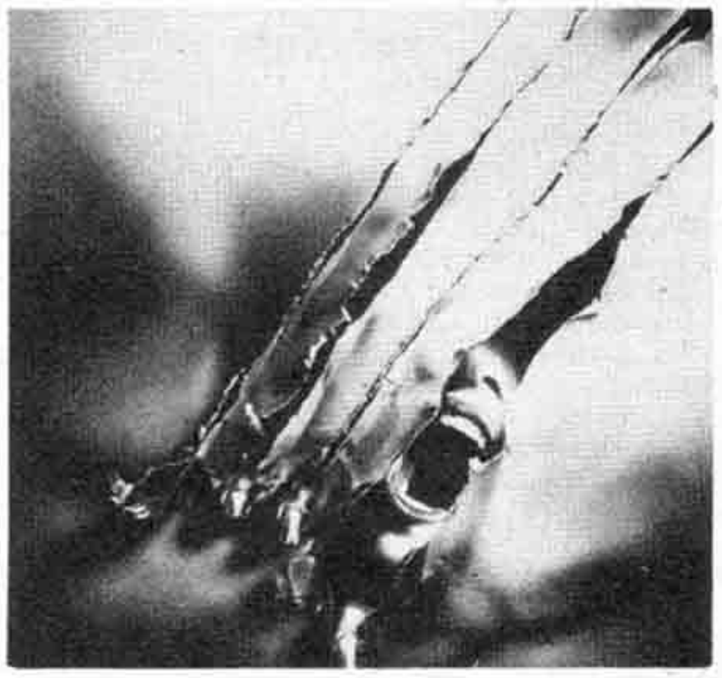

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Imagination Inc.

The Trouble with Martin

One of my best friends is Martin. He's only 19 years old, but we both love classic cars and exciting movies and we share other interests. Martin enjoys STARLOG and FUTURE LIFE and all my other magazines, but there's one problem: Martin refuses to read FANGORIA.

You see, Martin is very easily frightened. That's an understatement; *he is easily scared to death!* Let me tell you a story.

One weekend Martin and I wanted to see a movie, and we decided to see *Silent Scream.* That film had been advertised on TV that week, and Martin was aware that it was basically a suspense movie, but I pursuaded him to take a chance.

Within the opening half-hour of the film, *nothing scary happens.* An attractive young college student is looking for a place to live—in broad daylight—no blood, no cobwebs.

Now, one of the little games Martin and I play is "scare the other fellow." Sometimes he *hides* in my house and jumps out from behind a door, or out of the shower, or from below the stairs—unsuspecting places—just in order to frighten me. And sometimes I think up devious ways to frighten him too. It's a common game, the sort of thing lots of friends play with each other.

So, while we were sitting in this movie, I reached my hand over and surprised him by grabbing the back of his neck. He was *ice cold*—and he jumped a mile!

"Feel my heart," he said. I did, and it was pounding so hard and fast that I really thought it might burst out of his chest! That frightened *me,* and I realized that I'd better not scare Martin any more during the movie.

Most people kinda *enjoy* being scared. That's why horror movies are so popular, and that's why FANGORIA is so popular. But there are also people in the world who do *not* enjoy being frightened—they have a deep, serious fear of fear. That's the trouble with my friend Martin.

Now, if a car almost hits me or a rattlesnake suddenly appears in my path, I get scared and my heart pounds and I break out in a cold sweat. Who wouldn't? But those are *real dangers,* and I don't enjoy them.

The kind of dangers most people *enjoy* are fictional dangers. For instance, I went to see *ALIEN* with our whole magazine staff. I *knew* I was going to be frightened, but I also knew it was only a movie, and that I am a mature, sophisticated publisher who is too intelligent for that kind of nonsense. Nevertheless, when I walked out of the theater, I *breathed* for the first time in two hours! Really!

I also realized (there's no nice way to put this) that my armpits were soaking wet.

When I saw *The Fog* at a midnight screening, the theater was packed with couples—guys who had brought their dates there so they'd get squeezed to death while the gals screamed away. Everyone *enjoyed* the movie, and there was more good-natured laughter in the theater that night than there were gasps and shrieks.

Let's face it—*horror movies are fun!*

But not for everybody. There are people like Martin who, for whatever reasons, do not enjoy being frightened the way most of us do. Martin has firmly refused to see *Psycho, ALIEN, Zombie, Willard* and all the other good fright films. And he refuses also to look at FANGORIA.

I guess the photos of bloody, chopped-off heads and gnarled hands reaching up from under the bed are just too much for him. When I bring out FANGORIA, Martin leaves the room.

Now, I shouldn't take that personally; Martin's fear is something he can't control, and I should have sympathy for his condition. After all, he's my friend.

So what I'm planning to do is get all the back issues of FANGORIA and cut out all the gorey, bloody, gruesome photos—the ones he would especially be scared by. And some day when he's not home I'm going to spread out all those horried pictures under his pillow and sheets so when he gets ready to go to bed that night. . . .

You'll be able to hear him scream all the way to Cleveland.

Kerry O'Quinn/Publisher

The Postal Zone

LETTER-MONGERS

That's right, we here at FANGORIA are LETTER-MONGERS! *Send us your mail—we don't care if it's praise or pans, requests for features or demands that we go away—*we want your mail. *(Actually, we eat the stamps.) Send your old phone bills, solicitations from encyclopedia publishers and any other loose paper you have lying around the house to:*

THE POSTAL ZONE/FANGORIA
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WHITHER FANTASTICART?

FANGORIA,

. . . Your last issue was fantastic! Especially the article about *Maniac!*, though it wouldn't hurt if you cut down on the gory pictures a little. I was very disappointed when I couldn't find your section on "Fantastic Art." I hope that you don't plan to exclude it from future issues—I thought that these features were marvelous!

Mark Willingham
Rte 3, Box 510
Cherokee, AL 35616

"FantasticArt" is no more, due to the recent loss of our center color section and an apparent indifference to the feature among most of our readers. There is a possibility of its return in the future (a prospect that we would welcome), but meanwhile we advise patience. We also recommend that you note the increase in the amount of movie and TV-related art which we have published, including this issue's Jack Kirby portfolio of designs for TV's Thundarr.

A SOLICITED LETTER

Dear Bob,

. . . Thank you for your interest in my odd career.

An American Werewolf in London begins shooting this February in England and I am pleased to tell you that Rick Baker has been working for the past two months preparing the rather extraordinary makeups and special effects we will be using in the film.

As for *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, we have a screenplay by Evan Kim that I am happy with, but until Universal Studios decides that fish-men make money, I am afraid the project is in limbo.

Keep up the good work at FANGORIA. I do have one small complaint, however. Gore, for its own sake, quickly grows tiresome. Please try to refrain from repeatedly printing the most gruesome stills you get your hands on.

FANGORIA, *Famous Monsters, Cinefantastique,* STARLOG, etc. all serve the wonderful purpose of reassuring me that I am not the only crazy one.

John Landis
Universal City, CA.

If you've seen this month's cover, you now know that some of us are even crazier than you! Thanks for letting us know what's up!

TOO FAR?

. . . Okay, you went way overboard in issue #7. I mean the *Friday the 13th* scenes in #6 were okay, but those *Maniac!* scenes were totally repulsive! What makes you think that any normal person wants to see that scalping effect! In the movie, fine—if anyone wants to shell out money for that garbage they can see it. Keep showing such totally sick scenes and I'll stop buying FANGORIA. I'm sure many people will agree. Well, I've said my piece. Hopefully, you'll take this into consideration when *Zombie* or some other such garbage comes out.

Don Hicks
Carson City, NV

WHY SCI-FI?

Dear Editors,

. . . Concerning your coverage: Yes, I think you should downplay the SF content, STARLOG and FUTURE LIFE can carry that well enough. Issues #4, #5 and #6 each had SF as the main cover photo. Plus, it gets real dull (if not threateningly monotonous) when a major (minor) SF movie is covered in all three magazines within a month or so. FANGORIA should cover horror and fantasy with no excuses of "*Star Wars* is fantasy." Also: Your covers! Please can those bothersome film clips on the side—they can hinder an otherwise promising cover. Just imagine how #7's cover would have looked with only Nicholson's evil face plastered on it. Awesome. One last plea. Please! No more "Robots of *Black Hole*." No more "Aliens of *Trek* and *Galactia*." No more dull covers. Thank you and good luck—I'll always be reading.

Todd Casell
43 Dogwood Tr. Mt. Fern
Randolph, NJ 07869

Dear FANGORIA

. . . In regards to Mr. Goodrich's letter in your #7 issue, I feel that science fiction has a definite place in FANGORIA, as much as fantasy and horror. As Webster's dictionary defines fantasy: "Imagination or fancy; especially wild, visionary fancy." Any good science fiction contains elements of fantasy and, sometimes, horror (such as *ALIEN* and *Saturn 3*), and vice versa, some horror films (such as *Frankenstein*) can be classified as science fiction. Therefore, I, and probably others, believe that FANGORIA should remain the way it is, a wonderful mixture of fantasy, horror and science fiction. After all, they go hand in hand, like Fay Wray and King Kong.

Clay Hickman
1631 Wankesha
Helena, MT

Dear Bob,

. . . I used to be a big fan of *FM*, when they had good articles on horror movies, but I now find it tasteless and boring to find a horror mag doing science-fiction and fantasy articles. I hope your magazine and others will stick to horror. There are *TOO* many magazines already doing science-fiction features. I find that magazines that do these articles keep doing more and more of them. If readers want an SF magazine, there are plenty to choose from, but readers who want a horror-gore magazine will almost find it impossible to locate any. Luckily, your magazine has gotten off to a great start. If you stick to horror, you will never run out of material. I'm not putting your magazine down, I'm just trying to keep it great.

John P. Kelley
726 East Fulton St.
Waupaca, WI 54981

Dear Fang,

. . . Leave out the science fiction? I say leave it in. The only reason I buy FANGORIA is for its aliens, bizarre creatures and other SF stuff, like the interview with Tony Daniels. Also: I don't get to see R-rated movies, so when you cover one, could you explain the plot a little more?

Phil Suphal
65911 S.R. 15
Goshen, IN 46526

Dear Editors,

. . . I couldn't agree more with Steve Goodrich on why you do so much science fiction. I mean, how much science fiction can one take? There is enough of it printed on the pages of your sister magazines, STARLOG and FUTURE LIFE, so why pollute the pages of FANGORIA, which is supposed to cater to horror/fantasy fans, with it? It isn't fair! If you're going to include science fiction in FANGORIA—which is the best monster mag to date—why not just make it a three sci-fi mag family? True, we horror/fantasy fans

The Postal Zone

will be upset, but we'll just have to move down to a lower-quality monster magazine. I hope that day never comes!

Lance Angell
5005 Coachman Ct.
Bettendorf, IO 52722

Hmmm . . . there seems to be some division in the ranks here. Expect us to continue our study of reader opinion before we make any lasting decision.

MORE ON *THE SHINING*

Dear Fang,

. . . It all started on a Saturday morning. I walked up to the lady in the glass ticket booth and I said, "One for *The Shining*." She smiled and said, "How old are you?" I turned away, mumbling, "18, I'm 18 years old." "Well," she said, "do you have any identification?" I said, "Naw, it's in my car." She looked around a bit, then said, "Well . . . okay, go in." "Whew!" I thought—I sure fooled her!

The theater was about half full when I walked in. I took an end seat on the left-hand side (my favorite place to sit). Well, here I am to see *The Shining . . . The Shining . . . rated RRRRrrr . . .* maybe I should leave, I feel weird . . . no! It's too late—the lights are dimming—I'm trapped!!!

Well, I'll never forget that Saturday, it was sheer terror. Jack Nicholson's face runs through my mind every time I go to bed, or if I am home alone. Why don't you give us innocent moviegoers some kind of warning before we go sneaking in?

Ray Burris
1642 Montgomery Drive
Vista, CA 92083

Fangorious Folk,

. . . *Newsweek* called Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* "the first epic horror film."

The first epic horror film.

My A—.

I forked over three bucks to see this "epic" and came out feeling like a prize sucker. It was fortunate that I read the novel before I went, otherwise I would've felt like a total fool.

Specifically, *The Shining* is constructed very much like that DC-10 that crashed in Chicago. It starts out very smoothly, then the engine comes loose, flips over the wing and down comes the plane. KA-BOOM! The acting, for want of a better word, is on the same level as *The Munsters*. Jack Nicholson does an excellent Steve Martin routine, and if they ever remake *The Bride of Frankenstein*, Shelley Duvall is a natural for the part. When Duvall wiggles the baseball bat at a stalking Nicholson, I was yelling, "Dammit! Give *me* the bat!" The only professional acting in *The Shining* comes from Danny Lloyd, who should get a special Oscar for persevering in the face of Nicholson's clowning and Duvall's whining. Lloyd's portrayal of a little boy with a power he can't truly understand or control is wonderful. I wish I could say something about Scatman Crothers' role, but he wasn't in the film long enough to make a difference.

Oh, there are a few good things in this $20,000,000 debacle: the Steadicam work, Danny Lloyd, Wendy Carlos' music, the opening titles and the rotting corpse sequence. But all this does not justify a film that, for all of the money poured into it, turns out to be a dead puppy.

Mitchell B. Craig
102 East Confederate Ave.
Lancaster, SC 29720

FICTION FAN

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I must disagree with the statement you made in your overly brief "Books" section of Monster Invasions (issue #7), where you stated that recently there has been a scarcity of good horror fiction. Where have you guys been? In April of this year, the paperback edition of Peter Straub's *Ghost Story* was released. At the beginning, it's rather a slow-paced book, but it winds up to be an immense chiller on the highest level. More recently, in June, John Saul's *Comes the Blind Fury*, a story of the reincarnation and revenge of a blind child driven to a violent death, entered the booksellers. *The Island*, by Peter Benchley, concerns ghastley murders, modern-day pirates and a hidden civilization. It proved only to be a racy version of *Treasure Island*, but it is, nevertheless, a recent best-seller.

Brian McIntire
6507 Northwest Dr.
Des Moines, IO 50315

Of the books you mention, only Ghost Story *really impressed us, Brian. But you are right, there are a lot of horror novels around, and some of them are very good indeed (for instance, James Herbert's* The Dark, *just recently published by NAL). However, our complaint, which we apparently didn't make very clear, was about the absence of good short fiction in the field of horror. The best horror writers—from Poe, through Shirley Jackson and Daphne du Maurier, right up to Richard Matheson and Ramsey Campbell—have done their best work in the short story format. But books that are composed of short stories are not "promotable," as novels are, and never become best-sellers. That's why the paperback publishers, who are only interested in best-sellers these days, just aren't publishing horror in its most sublime form—the short story.*

FANGORIA: 100% MEAT

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . First, some criticism: I object to most of the articles you print being overwhelmingly favorable (Note: I said *most*). Now, on to the good stuff. I was sorry to see the high-quality paper and some of the color pictures go, but you are making it up with articles I enjoy, rather than glossy ones that look good but prove to be less interesting once you get into them. Thanks loads for the warning before the *Watcher in the Woods* article, because I have been looking forward to the film ever since a barrage of commercials hit our area. Unfortunately, the commercials danced across our television screen and the film never showed up!

Finally, the best thing about the entire issue (#7) . . . a real surprise . . . CHUCK JONES!!! I've been a fan of his ever since I began to watch the Bugs Bunny cartoons, although at the time I didn't know what a Chuck Jones was. He has changed a little from his Warner Brothers cartoons, but I still love his distinctive style and sense of humor. Hang in there, Chuck!! Keep up the good work, guys (and gals), you're aging well—like wine!

Glenn Ingersoll
306 Florence Ave.
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Thanks for the (mostly) complimentary letter. As for why our coverage of films is (almost) always favorable, the reason is simple—we don't have enough space in this bi-monthly mag to cover the films that we don't think will be very good. We won't name names, but if you'll look over our back issues, you may find some interesting omissions. Watcher, *meanwhile, is going through some major reworking, particularly the end. Suffice to say, it will be considerably different from what we reported. Plans are for a summer '81 release.*

CORRECTION

In issue #7, captioner Berthe Roegger dubbed a photo from Zombie: *"In the words of Curtis Mayfield, beauty is only skin deep." In fact, that Temptations tune was actually penned by Messrs. Eddie Holland and Norman Whitfield.*

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From the producers of *Time After Time* . . .
From the writer of *Demon Seed* . . .
From the director of *Arabian Adventure* . . .
. . . something a little different . . .

MOTEL HELL

By BOB MARTIN

The scene is an elevator in the midtown Manhattan office building that is the New York headquarters of United Artists pictures. The elevator is crowded with bow-tied gentlemen, representatives of various theater chains that have agreed to show *Motel Hell* during its premier engagement in late October. Everyone on the elevator has just seen the film for the first time, and for several floors the close-packed riders are covered by a thin, uncomfortable silence. It's a brittle silence, and eventually one voice cracks through:

"Was that *supposed* to be a comedy?"

Motel Hell is a comedy. It's also an unsettling, rather gruesome shocker. What makes it particularly unique is that it is a Hollywood film, financed by United Artists and made for just over $3 million with a union crew. Though its budget is incredibly low for a union picture, it exceeds the *combined* production budget for *Halloween, Friday the 13th, Phantasm* and *Dawn of the Dead*, though its target audience consists of the same moviegoers who have spent millions of box office dollars on such small, independent shockers in recent years.

The story concerns "Farmer Vincent" Smith (Rory Calhoun) and his sister Ida (Nancy Parsons), who own and operate the Motel Hello, a small family operation similar to hundreds of such hostelries studding the nation's highways. But Vincent is known throughout the local community for his other business operation—Farmer Vincent's Smoked Meats. All natural, and made with no preservatives. While hundreds, perhaps thousands, of local residents and passers-by are aware of the unique quality of Farmer Vincent's

meats, the hickory-smoked secrets of Vincent's cold cuts and sausages are known only to the Smiths.

As the film opens, the very private world of the Smiths is invaded when a young and beautiful girl named Terry (Nina Axelrod) and her boyfriend Bo (Everett Creach) have a motorcycle accident near the motel. Vincent, after witnessing the accident, buries poor Bo's body and takes Terry back to the motel to be nursed back to health.

There is a third Smith, Vincent and Ida's younger brother Bruce (Paul Linke), who left home as a boy and is now the deputy sheriff in Grainville, the nearby town. On a visit to Vincent's motel and farm, Bruce catches sight of Terry, and immediately falls in love with her. Terry, however, has fallen for the country charms of Farmer Vincent.

Luncheon Loaf

The ghastly goings-on that follow are best not described in these pages. Many of you will want to see it yourselves. The rest might be eating (what *is* in that luncheon loaf?).

"It sprung forth full-blown from our demented minds," explained Robert Jaffe, when we asked him just what brought him and his brother, Steven-Charles Jaffe, to write the *Motel Hell* screenplay. "We asked ourselves: What's one of the most grotesque things we can come up with, and one of the first things that came to mind was the image of people buried up to their necks." And things went on from there.

"It was a lot of fun for us," says Steven-Charles Jaffe, who produced *Motel Hell* with his brother Robert Jaffe. "It was a project that developed in the first place because my brother and I wanted to write something that we would have a good time writing. I've struggled through six screenplays and an unpublished novel by myself. My brother struggled through the first script for *Demon Seed* and several other screenplays by himself. But we never wrote together. One night we sat down and said: What would we like to do, and we started thinking of a horror movie. It was very enjoyable because one day Robert would take notes, and I'd say, 'Let's have this character do such-and-such,' and we'd argue and call each other names. By the end of a six-hour session we'd have a set of notes that he'd work up into screenplay form. The next day we'd go over it and then reverse roles; he'd make the suggestions, while I'd take notes and so on. By the end of four weeks we had a working draft."

So it was that some three years ago the script for *Motel Hell* was completed; then came the job of selling it to the studios. "There were two types of reactions," says Steven-Charles. "They either *hated* it or thought it was the most bizarre script they'd ever read, but were afraid of it and delivered a polite rejection." United Artists was originally in the "polite rejection" category. Months later, after some major changes in UA's executive offices (and after the beginning of the current shock film boom), the studio again contacted the Jaffes, and a production deal was made. As Steven-Charles says, "What's encouraging is that it's finally happened. I know now that if you believe enough in a good project there will come a time when it will get to the right people at the right time, and it will get made."

Despite his words, Steven-Charles Jaffe

(continued on page 49)

Farmer Vincent and his sister Ida put in a hard night's work toiling over their crops in the secret garden.

Photos: © 1980 Avco Embassy

Werewolves on the loose!
An exclusive preview of Joe "Piranha" Dante's

THE HOWLING

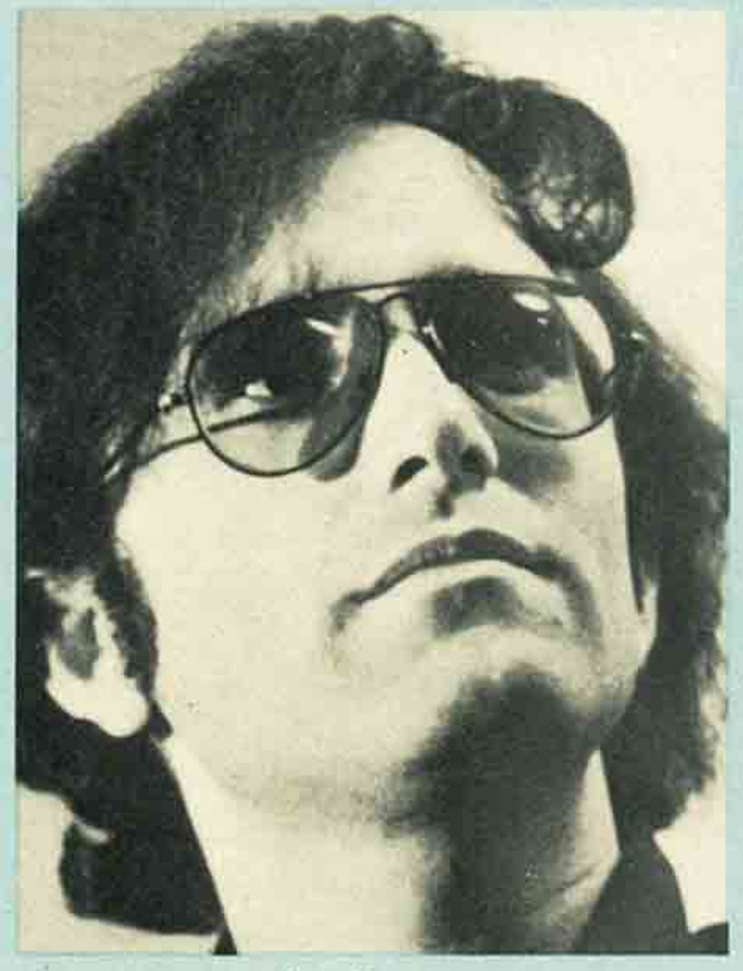
By BOB MARTIN & JIM WYNORSKI

Even a man who is pure in heart
And says his prayers by night
Can become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms
And the Autumn moon is bright.

So began a legend in 1941 when screenwriter Curt Siodmak penned the most enduring of werewolf classics—*The Wolf Man*, starring Lon Chaney Jr. *The Wolf Man* was not the first film of its type; its most notable predecessor was 1935's *Werewolf of London*, with Henry Hull as a continental version of the Man/Beast. But Siodmak's literate script "created" a good deal of the werewolf lore that would be retained in all the werewolf films to follow—all, that is, until *The Howling*, the first real werewolf film of the current cinematic wave of terror, planned for release in March of 1981.

The Howling first came to national attention two years ago, when Gary Brandner's novel of the same name was first published in paperback, and quickly climbed the ranks of the nation's best-seller lists. But a book's best-seller status is not always an indication of great literature (as we noted in our review of the book in issue # 5). Director Joe Dante, whose job it is to make a good scare film out of this work of throwaway literature, agrees. In fact, two completely different scripts were prepared and then thrown out before Dante was satisfied that the book's weaknesses had been deep-sixed.

"Our first big mistake in the adaptation stage was our attempt to keep it like the book," says Dante. "We assumed that when people pay money for a book they buy the whole book, not just the title. But everything we tried to take from the book just didn't make any sense. It's one of those books that seems to have been written rather quickly; people express fear and shock on page five, more fear and shock on page 10, page 30—more fear and shock. . . . Before you get through all the fear and shock, you find yourself skipping through long sections to see what *happens*.



Joe Dante

"At that point, the adaptation was being handled by [producer] Mike Fennell and I and a writer named Terry Winkless. When we realized we had to change directions, our writer was kind of written out, so we brought in John Sayles."

Impressive Credits

If Sayles' name seems familiar, there's little wonder in that. In recent years, he's turned out a number of scripts for Roger Corman's New World Pictures, including Dante's previous directorial effort, *Piranha*, and the current *Battle Beyond the Stars*; his most recent script assignment is to write the sequel to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* for Stephen Spielberg and Columbia Pictures. In a curious sort of double-life, Sayles is also a critically acclaimed prose writer. His slice-of-life novel, *Union Dues*, was nominated for a National Book Award last year.

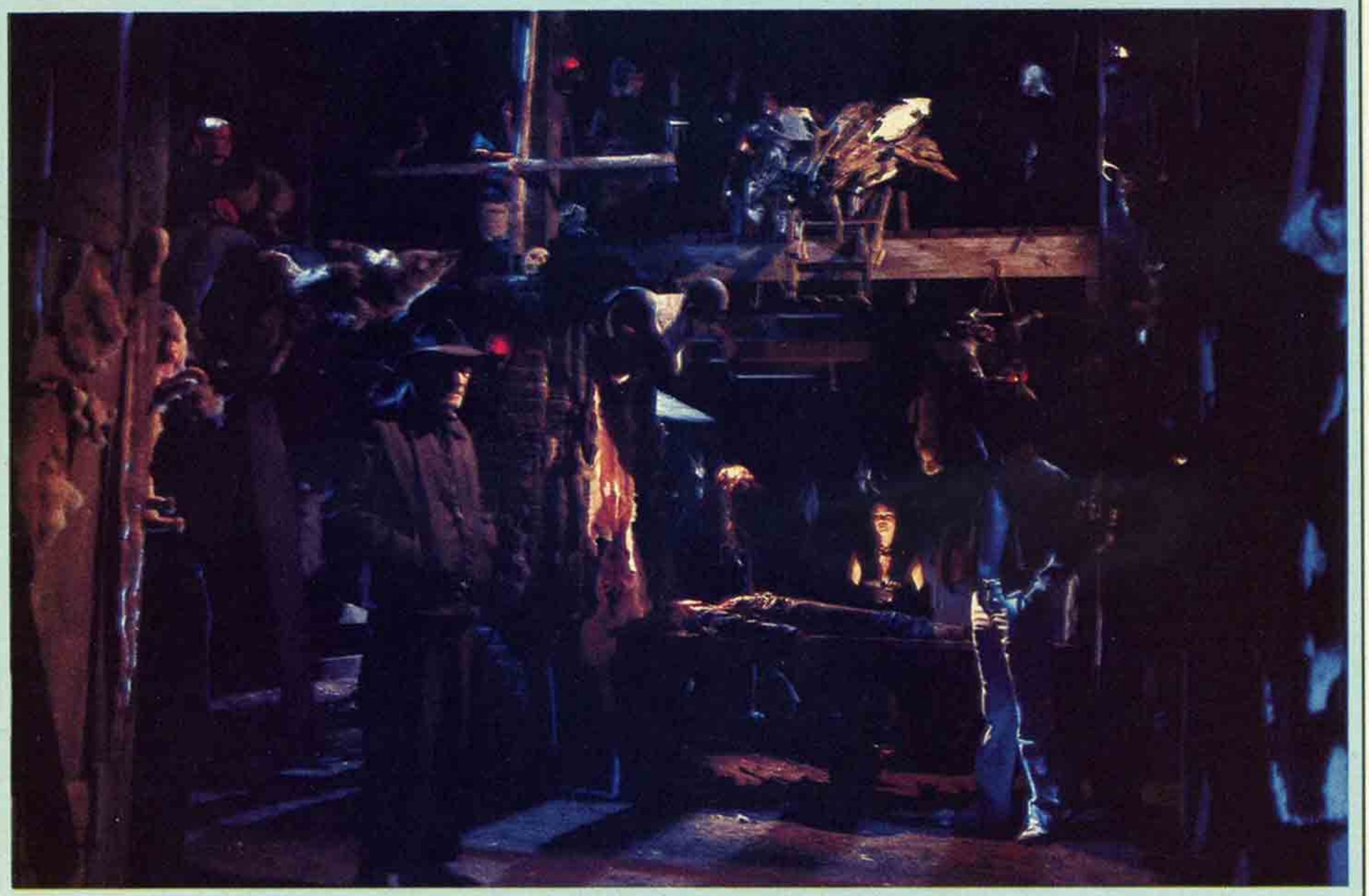
Rob Bottin prepares a victim of werewolf fury for the cameras.

"I kept one or two incidents from the Winkless script that I liked," recalls Sayles, speaking from his home in New Jersey. "Joe Dante and I decided: Okay, this is about a whole bunch of werewolves, and if we're going to set it in the present, we have to make it believable as happening in the present. We pretty much started from scratch, changing the woman from a housewife to a news reporter, and moving the action from an isolated, *Beverly Hillbillies*-type town to an Esalen-type institute. We also returned to the basic concept [of the book]—a normal person brought into a society of werewolves."

While Sayles acknowledges that many of his funniest lines were thrown out during the shooting of *Battle Beyond the Stars*, he feels that humor is essential to a film like *The Howling* for believability. "Finally, it's a werewolf movie," says Sayles. "Now, if you had someone telling you that there really were werewolves, initially it would seem very humorous to you. One of the problems with horror films is how literally everyone takes everything; but if this sort of thing were to happen, people who have a sense of humor would continue to have one—no matter what sort of danger of weirdness they were involved in. I wanted to reflect that, without making it the werewolf version of *Love at First Bite*, and being campy about it."

Dante has no objection to mixing fun with fear; it was his idea to name various characters after directors of werewolf films (we'll leave it to you to learn which ones). Dante also arranged for cameo appearances by L.A. television personality and screenwriter Mick Garris and by two of Dante's former employers—Forrest Ackerman (Dante began his career as a journalist for FA's *Famous Monsters*) and Roger Corman.

The final shooting script dispenses with the rape scene that opens the novel—and which leads the victim's husband to take her to the isolated, werewolf-haunted town of Drago for a "rest." Instead, Karen (Dee Wallace) is a TV newswoman who is plagued by a series of calls from an apparently psychotic viewer who wishes to meet her. She agrees to see him, but arranges for a hidden news crew to "cover" the meeting. Her plans go awry, and the caller is shot and killed in the course of their



John Carradine (left) and Elisabeth Selden participate in a bizarre wolfen ritual.

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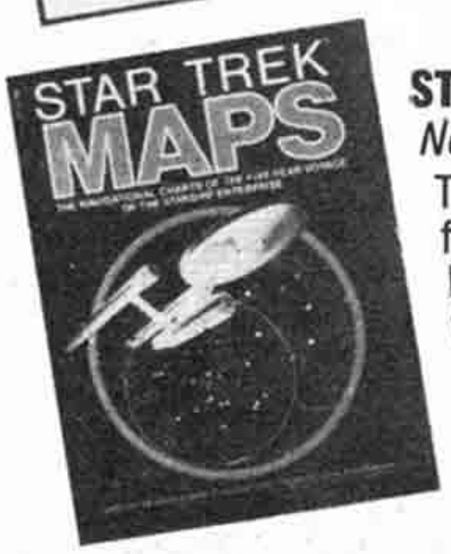

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encounter. Her feelings of guilt over the incident result in a breakdown during a newscast. She goes for treatment to a famous psychotherapist (played by Patrick Macnee) who sends her and her husband Roy to "the Colony," a therapeutic resort somewhat reminiscent of the Esalen Institute and other foundations devoted to the "human potential movement."

"It's a well-known place," says Dante, "but no one really knows what goes on there." Everyone assumes it's on the up-and-up, because politicians, tennis players and all the 'right' kinds of people go there. The basic things that happen in the book happen there, except the woman's beloved dog doesn't get killed, and the two hikers don't show up just to get killed—we've 86'd as much of that sort of thing as possible."

One of the redeeming qualities of the book was its bizarre romantic triangle involving Roy, Karen and an exotically beautiful lady werewolf by the name of Marcia Luria. Marcia has been retained, we were relieved to hear. "You'll like Elizabeth Selden, who plays Marcia," confides Dante, "she looks like Barbara Steele did in 1959."

Werewolf Lore

As we said at the outset, *The Howling* will make its biggest break from movie tradition in its treatment of the werewolves themselves. According to Dante, his break from tradition is actually a return to the genuine lore of the werewolf. "We started out by going to old woodcuts and drawings to see what werewolves used to look like before they all started looking like people with hair. Many of the most disturbing ones we found looked just like wolves except that they were standing on their hind legs, ambulating about and making faces. So we went more toward what the real lore was. Still, you can't do that entirely; for instance, the idea that you can become a werewolf by the bite of one was started by Curt Siodmak. Though it does vary from country to country, it's usually considered that you become a werewolf by hexing or enchantment; werewolves usually just murdered people and that was it. For the purposes of a movie you can really need that idea, that you can become a werewolf by being bitten, so we kept that. But the full moon business got to be a problem.

"The full moon angle became something of a pain because you have to wait a month between attacks—I mean, come on, this is a short movie! One of the reasons the book is so awful is that it takes place over such a long period of time, and the people in it are so consistently stupid. As the events take place, the people have months and months to mull things over, but they apparently don't know a thing about werewolves. Nobody ever mentions them, so it's safe to assume that none of them have ever seen a werewolf movie or a Marvel comic, or even have come into contact with anything of the sort."

After tossing out the convention of the lupine lunar cycle, Dante found himself able to contract the book's events into the time-span of one week. But, even with the brisker pace, won't some viewers squawk at transformation scenes which occur without the benefit of the moon's supernatural radiance?

Dante cites as precedent one of the greatest classics of screen terror: "In *The Horror of Dracula*, there's a scene with Peter Cushing in which he sits by a gramophone, listening to a cylinder recording that contains a lot of information on vampires. The voice of the recording debunks the idea that vampires can turn into wolves or bats. It was solely for the benefit of the audience, preparing them for the fact that this vampire wasn't going to turn into a bat or a wolf. It was a very good idea, because it made the picture seem more scientific, and it got them out of a plothole where they might have had the whole audience sitting around waiting for Dracula to turn into a bat. We did something similar in our approach to the full moon angle."

The Ackermonster

Dante's familiarity with screen history is no surprise to those familiar with his former career as a film journalist, a career begun when, as a teenager, he sent a

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lengthy letter to Forrest Ackerman detailing the 50 worst films he had ever seen. The erudite Ackermonster, knowing a good letter when he sees it, transformed the letter into a feature article in *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, entitled "Dante's Inferno." His subsequent work appeared in the late, great *Castle of Frankenstein*, and he later served as managing editor of *Film Bulletin* before going to work for Roger Corman's New World Pictures.

Another graduate of New World is Mike Fennell, the film's producer. "I worked my way up at New World, as prop man, and doing various odd jobs on the production end. I worked on films like *Grand Theft Auto*, *Eat My Dust*, and I worked a bit on *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*—that's where I met Dan Blatt, the executive producer of *The Howling*. I was associate producer of *Avalanche*, and then I asked Roger if I could produce a picture. Roger said sure, if you do it for very little money, and the picture costs hardly anything. I said sure, and that was *Rock 'n' Roll High School*."

That film was a one-of-a-kind motion picture, a rock 'n' revolution musical fantasy starring FANGORIA's favorite cheerleader, P.J. Soles and the Ramones. In the course of filming, Fennell and his crew were required to bring off the illusion of an entire high school engulfed in flames, a feat which Fennell credits to his mechanical effects man Roger George. *The Howling* is a very different sort of picture, but Fennell sees his task as the same.

Fennell sees his job as primarily one of "getting it all together, and getting the right people. On a picture like this, or *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, fairly low-budget pictures, you have a responsibility to the investors not to spend too much; you have to spend it where you know it will show up on screen. You have to choose people who will get along and work together, and have the talents needed for the picture. The most important thing is that you start with a good script—the next thing is to have people who can bring it off, especially with a picture like this where you have to find good non-union people; you find that most of the best people are in the union [and are therefore prohibited from working on a non-union film]."

Among the talents recruited for *The Howling*, Fennell has a particular favorite: "It was a special pleasure to work with John Carradine. This is his 361st picture. It's really great to work with someone who has been making pictures since the silent days, and who continues doing it, and with great vigor. It's inspiring to see someone with that kind of energy. He had great stories to tell, and it was wonderful working with him."

Fennell also takes pride in the team of effects artists he and Dante have signed on for the picture: Rob Bottin, Peter Curan and David Allen.

As we write this, all three of these talented gentlemen are neck-deep in effects work for the film. While we hope to speak to each of them in some detail upon *The Howling*'s release, we can reveal some closely held secrets concerning each effects-man's planned contribution to the film.

Bottin prepares to attack actress Belinda Balaski with a thing that goes howl in the night.

Rob Bottin has devised a series of masks that will allow much of the werewolf transformation to occur on-screen. Because the werewolves in question are more wolfen than man-like, it was decided that no man in a suit can convincingly portray the creatures in full-length shots. Bottin's solution: a mechanical werewolf, built to full scale and controlled by a series of rods and levers.

Peter Curan, whose cel-animation effects for the two *Star Wars* films have won him a sterling reputation, is preparing a sequence that takes place in a painted landscape shot with a multiplane camera to give the sequence an impression of realistic depth. In Curan's scene, two werewolves, silhouetted by a campfire, will undergo a transformation while making love—another first in cinematic history.

Stop-Motion Werewolves

Finally, David Allen, who is simultaneously working on the big-budget, stop-motion effects comedy *Caveman* (as described in issue #8), has been called upon to create some very brief stop-motion sequences; one shows several werewolves on the grounds of a burning barn, and others in which the werewolves are to register reaction in their faces and postures—a feat impossible to achieve with the masks and mechanical wolf.

All three of these gentlemen found themselves hard-pressed to complete their sequences last August, because at that time effects work had barely begun, though Avco Embassy Pictures was planning an October release. Dave Allen spoke to us briefly during that stage, shortly after it was decided to bring him into the project.

"All of it is supposed to be ready in about five weeks," Allen told us with characteristic calm. "Considering that the molds aren't even made yet—and these are supposed to be fur-covered creatures, three of them—it's going to be pretty tight. After all the preparatory work, there may be only about 12 days in which to do all the actual animation. I'm pressing forward with an idea that I have, a sort of mechanical assist—people who will act through the movements [on film] before the animation is done. It should help them to move in a more man-like way; speed up the process, and give better results."

Just days after we spoke to Allen, the effects men on *The Howling* made a joint appeal for more time—three weeks was all they needed. However, because of a little thing called "booking strategy," it was decided to delay the release of *The Howling* until spring '81. The delay might be a little excruciating to those who were looking forward to Joe Dante's plan for a Howlo-ween treat, but it seems sure to guarantee a better film.

Mick Garris, who serves as Avco Embassy's executive specialist in the field of horror and fantasy, is bristling with confidence that *The Howling* will become one of next year's biggest horror hits. "We've had really great success in horror and fantasy recently with *The Fog*, *Phantasm*, *Watership Down* and *Murder by Decree*. Coming up, we've got *The Howling*, David Cronenberg's *Scanners* and John Carpenter's new film, *Escape from New York*, so right now we have three films in the works by the three best directors in the field."

Avco, Garris tells us, is determined to compete with the major studios, and has found its starting place in the largely neglected field of horror and fantasy.

If *The Howling* works the magic it's intended to, that seems a pretty good place to start.

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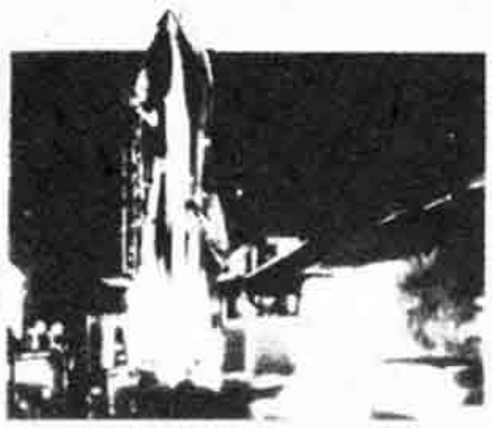
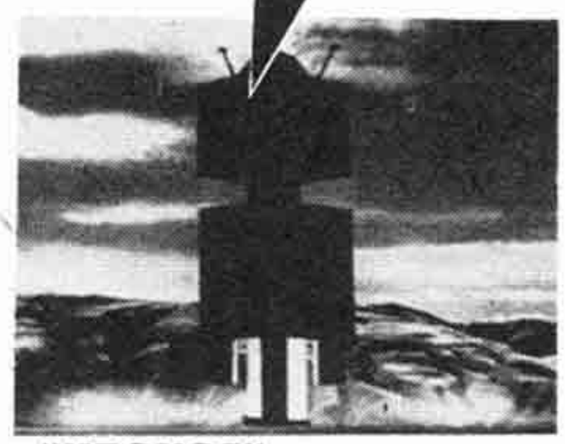


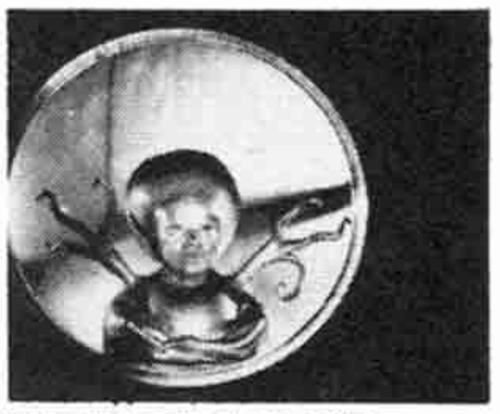
"ROCKETSHIP X-M"

Color tinted—Starring: Lloyd Bridges, Osa Massen, Hugh O'Brian, Noah Beery Jr., Morris Ankrum. First screen story dealing seriously with man's flight to another planet. A landmark adventure, directed by Kurt Neumann; music score by Ferde Grofe. (Original 1950 version.)



"KRONOS"

B/W—Starring: Jeff Morrow, Barbara Lawrence, John Emery, Morris Ankrum. A flying saucer crashes into the ocean, and a giant robot, capable of draining all Earth's energy, emerges. Atomic bombs are useless as it approaches L.A.



"INVADERS FROM MARS"

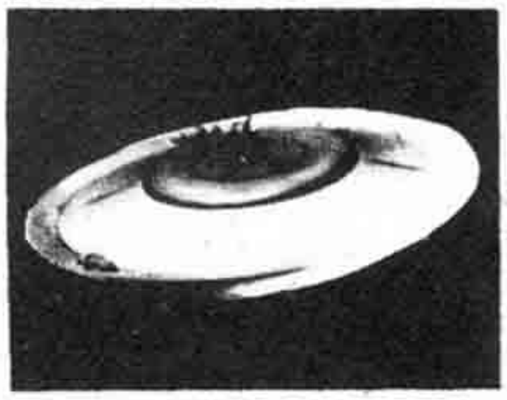
Color—Starring: Arthur Franz, Helena Carter, Jimmy Hunt, Morris Ankrum. Young boy is unable to convince townspeople he has seen flying saucer land in backyard. One by one, his parents and others are "taken over" by invading aliens. Classic cult movie directed by William Cameron Menzies.

"TALES OF TOMORROW" Vol. 1 (3 episodes)

B/W—This classic SF anthology series was produced live from 1951 to '53 by George Foley with top-name writers and actors. Includes: "Frankenstein," starring Lon Chaney Jr.—"Read to Me Herr Doktor," a robot tale starring Mercedes McCambridge—"Tomb of King Tarus," a 4,000-year-old mummy, starring Walter Abel. (Includes commercials & trailers.)

"FLIGHT TO MARS"

Color—Starring: Cameron Mitchell, Marguerite Chapman, Arthur Franz. An expedition crashlands on the red planet and discovers an advanced underground civilization. Beautiful special effects, matte work! Produced by Walter Mirisch.



"THE FLYING SAUCER"

B/W—Starring: Mikel Conrad, Pat Garrison, Hanz Von Teuffen, Virginia Hewett. A huge saucer, hidden under a glacier, is the subject of search by U.S. and Russian scientists. This was the **first** film dealing with flying saucers and was reviewed by FBI before they allowed its release.

"TOM CORBETT—SPACE CADET" Vol. 1 (3 episodes)

B/W—Starring Frankie Thomas as Tom, this series became gigantically popular in early 50s, playing on four major TV networks, with a radio version, a comic strip and numerous merchandising tie-ins. Based on Robert Heinlein's book **Space Cadet**, the series had rocket expert Willy Ley as tech advisor. Includes: "Ace of the Space Lanes" & "The Martian Revolt," plus premiere 15-minute episode, "At Space Academy." (Commercials & Trailers)

"THE CRAWLING EYE"

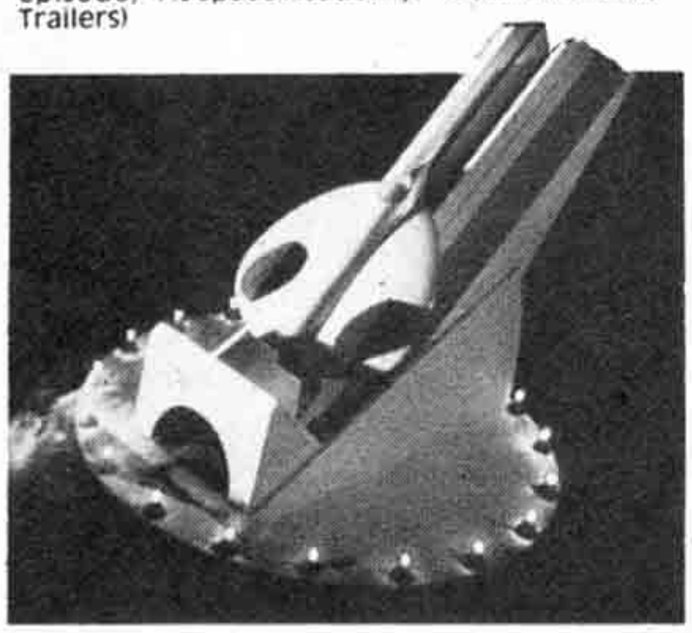
B/W—Starring: Forrest Tucker, Janet Monroe, Jennifer Jayne. A chilling SF terror tale of a shimmering alpine fog that contains deadly creatures from another planet. Victims are found decapitated; tremendous tension! Released in England as "The Trollenberg Terror," with music by Stanley Black.

"HIDEOUS SUN DEMON"

B/W—Starring: Robert Clarke and Nan Petersen. A scientist at an atomic lab is accidentally exposed to radiation which turns him into a grotesque killer reptile when sunlight hits him. A real gem of "camp" horror!

"STRANGER FROM VENUS"

B/W—Starring: Patricia Neal, Helmet Dantine, Derek Bond. A benevolent (but frightening) being from space lands to warn Earth and pave the way for arrival of "mother ship." Never released theatrically in U.S., this is essentially "The Day the Earth Stood Still" redressed. Historical! Fascinating!



"SPACE PATROL" Vol. 1 (3 episodes)

B/W—Starring Ed Kemmer as Buzz Corry & Lynn Osborn as Cadet Happy, with guest stars. Set in the distant future, this sensational adventure series was one of the longest running and most popular of early TV, with the Space Patrol braving weekly dangers ("live" from Los Angeles) to keep interplanetary peace. Included: Early 15-minute episode, prior to Buzz Corry's emergence, plus two 30-minute episodes with commercials, "Mystery of Planet X" and "The Trap on Planet X."

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A Progress Report

Yes, Virginia, there will be a Conan movie . . .

By ED NAHA

Conan the Barbarian is coming to the wide screen.

After years of dwelling in cinematic limbo, cameras are finally prepared to roll on this film debut of Robert E. Howard's classic pulp hero. Set to begin shooting in Spain in January of 1981, *Conan* is being directed by John Milius, bankrolled by Dino De Laurentiis, designed by artist Ron (*ALIEN*) Cobb and will star fleet-of-foot, lumbering-of-lip body builder Arnold Schwarzenegger as the strongman.

Budgeted at approximately $20 million, the epic adventure will be the culmination of a five-year dream of a group of filmmakers to bring Howard's hero to life; not an easy task considering that the character has been totally overlooked by the Hollywood crowd for five decades.

The origins of Conan the Barbarian can be traced back to 1925 when Texan Robert Howard sold his first action story (concerning the exploits of a caveman), "Spear and Fang," to *Weird Tales* magazine, a publication which would become his literary home. Howard was an introverted fellow, fascinated with physical strength and assorted heroics. A shy, puny child, Howard had taken a body-building course as a youth which transformed him into a muscle-bound titan. After concocting such pulp characters as Solomon Kane (a righteous 16th-century Puritan) and Kull (a barbaric type), Howard turned his atten-

(continued on page 58)

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Bride of the Monster! The She Creature! Voodoo Woman! *One of AIP's top producers recalls his filmmaking career.*

By ALEX GORDON

Editor's note: As a lifelong fan, collector, producer and archivist, Alex Gordon is one of the greatest living authorities on film, particularly in the SF and horror fields. Starting with issue #11, Mr. Gordon will be a regular FANGORIA columnist, fielding your questions on the films of yesteryear—films both great and small. The following pages serve as a brief introduction to Gordon's years of film work.

When I was a kid growing up in London, we were not allowed to see any horror movies and, of course, there was no television then. The British Board of Film Censors graded all movies—"U" (Universal) for films anyone could see, "A" certificate where anyone under 16 had to be accompanied by an adult, and "H" for horror, *nobody* under 21 admitted under *any* circumstances. That made it tough for us Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney fans; we knew our favorites from movie magazines only and what we had read about their pictures. Who would have known then that *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* would eventually become children's fare? Certainly not I, who was shocked when, on my first visit to New York and working as publicist for cowboy star Gene Autry, I gave three kids standing outside a theater in 42nd Street money to buy tickets for Gene's *Back in the Saddle* only to have them go next door for the *Frankie* and *Drac* reissue show!!

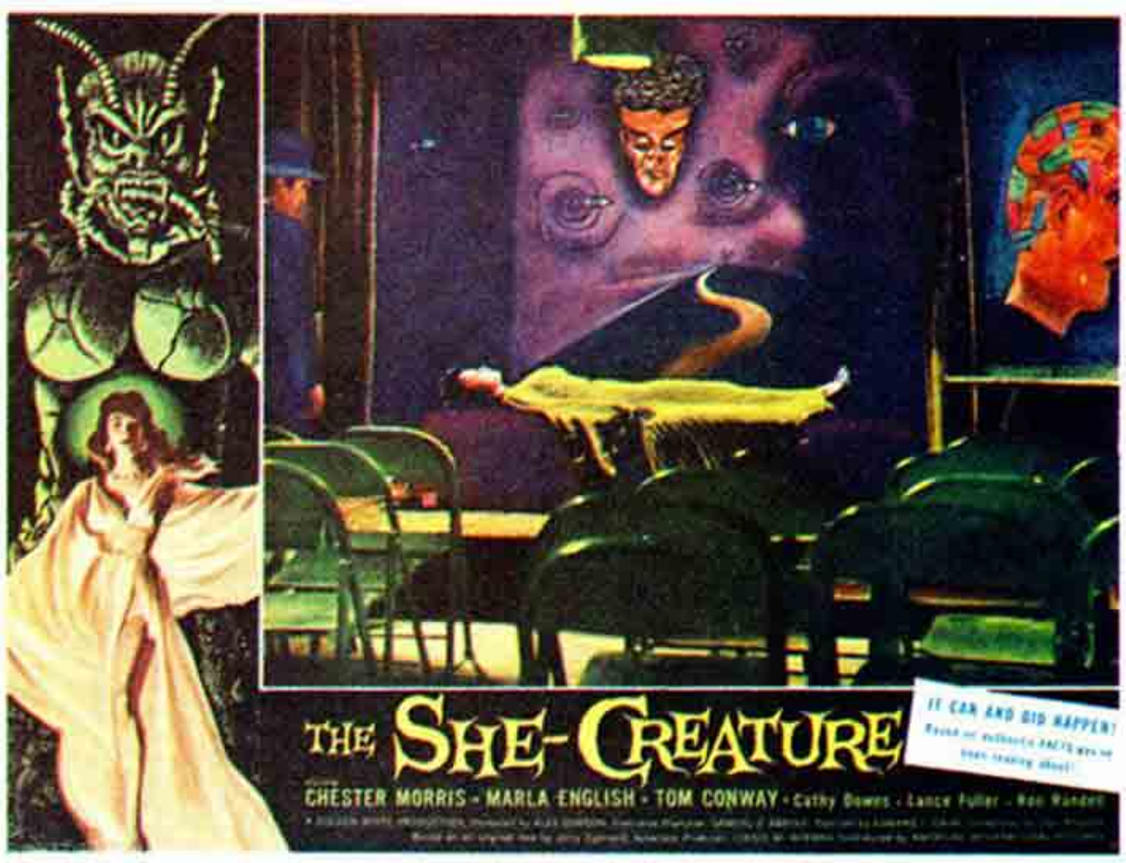
But I'm getting ahead of myself. Being a big collector of movie stills, magazines, postcards and other material and haunting the movie theaters for old and new movies, I finally made some progress—I caught Boris Karloff in *Night Key* and *The House of Rothschild* and Bela Lugosi in *Postal Inspector*. I'll grant that these weren't horror films, but at least I could see them on the screen. Then came *The Invisible Ray*—a break for us, kids *were* permitted to that one—and both Boris *and* Bela were in it. My greatest downfall was trying to see that obscure Gaumont-British Karloff picture, *The Ghoul*, revived only once, to my knowledge, at a small classic theater. There my grandmother tried to persuade the manager that my brother Richard (now producing *Inseminoid* in London) and I were over 21—when we were more like 14 and 11. No way! We set up such a wail of dismay that he offered us free tickets to Shirley Temple across the street—but we wanted to see *Karloff*! It would be 40 years before we got to see that picture, due to the efforts of writer, professor and film historian William K. Everson who located the only remaining print in an eastern European film archive! It was worth waiting for!! Although it was a picture Boris Karloff always wanted to forget; whenever we met (he starred in two pictures for my brother, *Corridors of Blood* and *The Haunted Strangler*) and I mentioned *The Ghoul*, he would say, in mock horror, "Oh God! Oh no!!!" Actually, it was a very effective horror film with great lighting and camera work and a strong cast including Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Sir Ralph Richardson, the latter's first film.

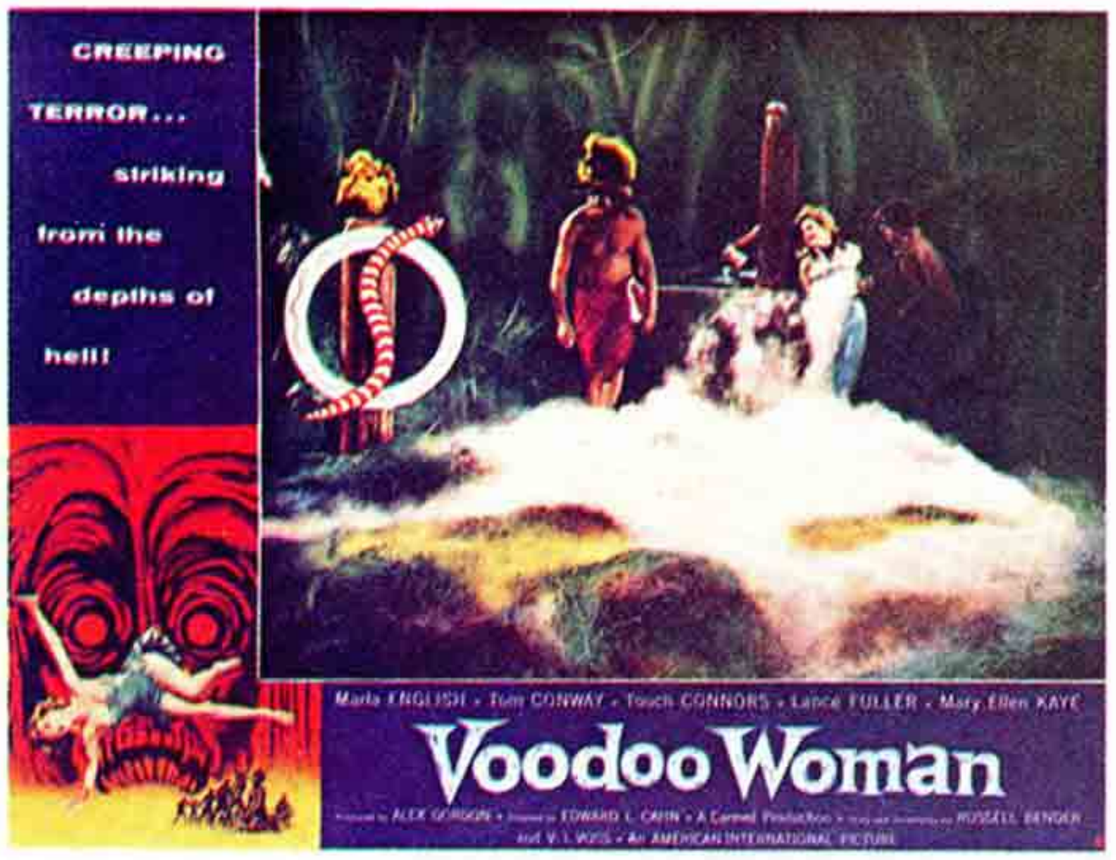
Then came World War II, and England was reluctant to import horror films. The careers of stars specializing in those roles suffered, especially that of Bela Lugosi. I was in the Army from 1942 to 1946. After basic training and being stationed in out of the way places, I walked for two hours to get to my first movie in six months—*Ghost of Frankenstein*. It was a bad print, but I enjoyed it greatly and felt I was back in business regardless of the real horrors of the outside world.

Film great Bela Lugosi flanked by youthful fans Richard Gordon (left) and Alex.

Meeting Lugosi

Then, in 1947, I ventured to America—New York first, and the Sea Cliff Summer Theater, where I met Bela Lugosi in person when he appeared in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Such a charming man, with his lovely wife Lillian—after the show they invited us to the best lobster dinner we ever had and we talked about England. He had done *The Mystery of the Marie Celeste* there and now he wanted to tour there in *Dracula*. We were able to set up a tour for him and also a movie. He had done *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, and there was a popular British comedian, Arthur Lucan, who had made his character of




CREEPING TERROR... striking from the depths of hell!
Marla ENGLISH · Tom CONWAY · Touch CONNORS · Lance FULLER · Mary Ellen KAYE
Voodoo Woman

All Photos: AIP/Courtesy Alex Gordon

"Old Mother Riley," a cleaning woman, a long-running vaudeville and movie favorite. So—*Old Mother Riley Meets Dracula* was the idea, which became *Old Mother Riley meets the Vampire*, because, at the time, Dracula was not in public domain. The picture was eventually released in the United States under the title *Vampire over London*.

That was the beginning of a long personal friendship with Bela Lugosi, which ended only when he went to a hopefully happier life. I decided to write a script, first entitled *The Atomic Monster*, for Bela. However, then working as assistant film booker for the Walter Reade circuit in New York for a couple of years, I was offered a job as publicist for Gene Autry on his personal appearance tours around the country with the Gene Autry Show. I jumped at the chance. I traveled all over the United States, often doing 85 dates in 85 days, and ended up in Hollywood in 1952, where I resumed my friendship with Bela.

Getting involved with the production of a low-budget Western, *The Lawless Rider*, I met Eddie Wood, and he did a script from my *Atomic Monster* story and eventually

Paul Blaisdell and Lori Nelson of *The Day the World Ended* do a quick two-step.

filmed it as *Bride of the Monster*. With an impossible shooting schedule and very little money, the picture was a great disappointment. Meanwhile, I had met Sam Arkoff and Jim Nicholson who, with Roger Corman, formed a new production and distribution company, American Releasing Corporation. We tried to use the footage of Lugosi from *Vampire over London* for a new project, to be entitled *King Robot*, shooting extra scenes to make a new picture. But Bela did not match his appearance in the earlier film by then. So we did a Western, *Apache Woman*, with Lloyd Bridges, which I exec-produced and Roger Corman directed. Then there was *The Day the World Ended*, for which we performed the same chores.

I got Richard Denning and Lori Nelson for that one, as they had worked at Universal and were good names for a low-budget entry from a new company, backed by solid troupers like Adele Jergens, Touch Connors (now Mike Connors) and Raymond Hatton, who would become a regular in my pictures. We shot for 10 days in Bronson Canyon, a popular Hollywood location, and in a small local studio. ABC picked up an independent, *The Phantom from 10,000 Leagues*, to make the company's first successful release combination. Paul Blaisdell, that brilliant and vastly underrated specialist in costumes, special effects and makeup, built the Mutant and played the role in *The Day the World Ended*.

During his Army days, Gordon anticipated *Halloween* with a 'photo-story' about a masked maniac. Below: Ed Woods' *Bride of the Monster*, from Gordon's script.

The Screen's Master of the WEIRD...
IN HIS NEWEST and MOST DARING
SHOCKER!
BELA LUGOSI
More Horrifying than "DRACULA" ..."FRANKENSTEIN!"
BRIDE OF THE MONSTER
TOR JOHNSON · TONY McCOY
LORETTA KING · HARVEY DUNN

"Exploitation" Films

A prominent exhibitor suggested a title to us—*The She-Creature*—and that became our next project in the horror line. ABC in those days specialized in "exploitation" pictures—teenage, motorcycle, rock, horror, sci-fi, World War II and beach party epics. Jim Nicholson would think up a title and make up the ads—and then Sam Arkoff's brother-in-law, Lou Rusoff, would write a script around that material. *The She-Creature* was inspired by the Bridey Murphy case, a real woman who under hypnosis seemed to live in earlier times and be another person. I wanted to bring some exciting casting elements to this. For the female lead we had the beautiful Marla English, the Elizabeth Taylor of low-budget movies, formerly under a Paramount contract. For the hypnotist I wanted Peter Lorre, and his big-business backer Edward Arnold, as Lorre and Arnold had performed so brilliantly in Joseph von Sternberg's Columbia picture, *Crime and Punishment*.

Lorre's agent committed him for the role, but when Peter read the script, he refused to do it. Edward L. Cahn, a fine director who edited *All Quiet on the Western Front* and directed such classics as *Law and Order* and *Laughter in Hell* for Universal, got Edward Arnold's agreement. But two days before start of production, Arnold died. We had to do some fast reshuffling. I tried for John Carradine, but he was on a Shakespearian kick and refused to do any more low-budget horror films at the time. I switched wonderful Chester Morris, flying out from New York for the Arnold role, to the Lorre role. He and Audrey Hepburn had a wonderful time reminiscing about the creature in later years. Tom Conway, set for the role of a police inspector and flying to Hollywood from Europe, found himself doing the Arnold part. Ron Randell, recently on Broadway in *Bent*, had a week before leaving for Australia and so agreed to play the inspector. Other talents included in this one were popular old-time comedian El Brendel and his wife, lovely Cathy Downs, Lance Fuller, Paul Dubov, funny Frank Jenks and the invaluable Paul Blaisdell as the creature, which he constructed.

Pretty Luana Walters, who had appeared with Bela Lugosi in *Shadows over Chinatown* and in my picture *Girls in Prison*, and Jack Mulhall as a shady lawyer completed the cast.

We shot for nine days at Paradise Cove in Malibu and in a small independent studio. The picture eventually went into release, billed with Roger Corman's *It Conquered the World*.

Next for me was *Voodoo Woman*, but as returns were slow coming in from theaters and money was being used to make other pictures at American, we only had six days to shoot it! Eddie Cahn did it again, and Marla English, Tom Conway, Touch Connors, Lance Fuller, Mary Ellen Kaye and Paul Blaisdell did yeoman work to bring it in. By that time I was engaged to a pretty girl who worked at United Airlines and to impress her I took her to the sneak preview of *Voodoo Woman* in Burbank. Little did I know that her preference ran to the likes of *The Red Shoes*, the movies of Bette Davis, Katherine Hepburn and Sonja Henie, and foreign productions. After the preview, she gave me back the ring! "Why can't you make movies like the ones I like?" she asked. I tried to explain budget limitations to her. "But that fight was

awful," she said. "Why didn't you use doubles if the actors couldn't do it?" "No money," I replied. "And besides, it was a few minutes before 6 p.m. and at 6 we ran out of time—and money!!" It took a little while to convince her—and when we agreed that low budget need not mean low quality and that one must strive to produce the best under the offered circumstances, she capitulated. We have been married for 23 years; she even wrote two Western movie scripts for me!

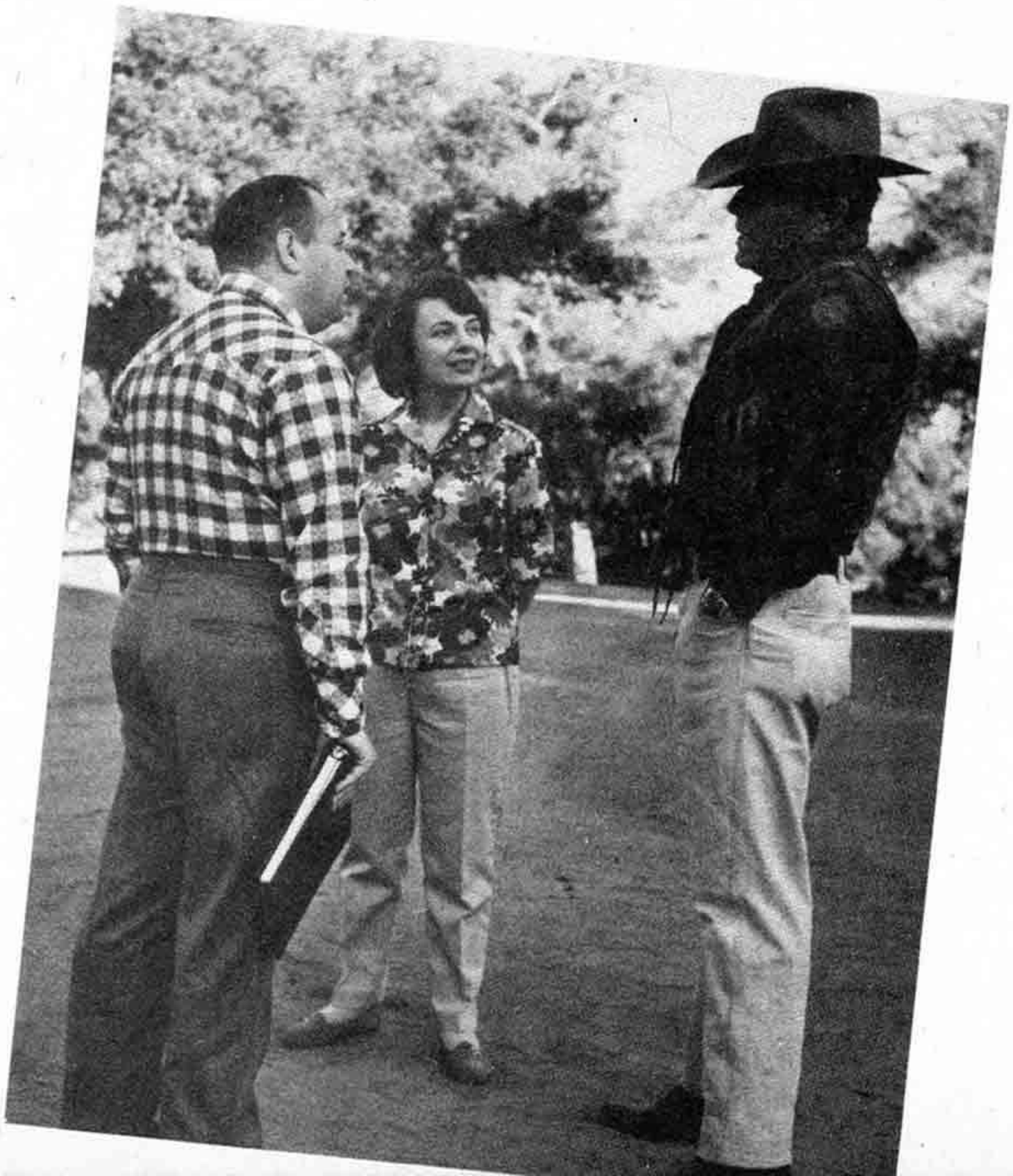
I was still accompanying Bela Lugosi on his appearances—on the *Red Skelton Show*, at the opening of *House of Wax*, and his movies *Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn Gorilla* and *The Black Sleep*. Eddie Wood had just shot two days with him on *Plan 9 from Outer Space* when he died. Bela was such a nice man—cultured, amusing, warm-hearted—I'd love to film his life story someday in such a way that really does him justice.

Switching Studios

After a few more pictures for American—now American International Pictures—like *Dragstrip Girl, Motorcycle Gang, Flesh and the Spur, Jet Attack* and *Submarine Seahawk*, I moved to Allied Artists for *The Atomic Submarine*. Talk about low budgets—we had to do this one in six days. Special effects took a bit longer. Arthur Franz, Dick Foran, Brett Halsey, Tom Conway, Victor Varconi, Bob Stelle and Joi Lansing, who died much too young, were our stars. Spencer Gordon Bennet, that great veteran of serials and action pictures, directed. I always used two real old-timers from silent days and early talkies in my pictures, Edmund Cobb and Frank Lackteen. Lackteen was a villain in many of Spence's serials, but had to use ingenuity here as they were too mature to serve on the submarine! So I had them walking by on the dock on shore. The casting man at Allied gave me a lot of trouble on this, but the head man, Steve Broidy, was on my side. Then to Columbia and again six days only—for *The Underwater City*, a story idea my wife Ruth Gordon came up with from an article she saw in the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner*. It was a story about a colony of people living on the bottom of the ocean to harvest food and become self-sufficient in case of nuclear disaster, over-crowding and so on. Orville Hampton did the screenplay and Howard Anderson worked 23 weeks on the special effects and the underwater earthquake. It was the first movie to deal with such events on the bottom of the ocean—many have followed suit since. William Lundigan and Julie Adams were the leads and Raymond Massey was to be the scientist (a lecture tour had prevented Basil Rathbone from doing it), but Massey's plane was diverted to Boston from New York in a storm, so we had to drop him and use Carl Benton Reid instead. Eddie Cobb and Frank Lackteen were aboard, too, as usual—but on the surface! Frank McDonald, veteran of many Gene Autry films, directed.

Ruth had done a screenplay for *Masque of the Red Death*, from the very short

Touch Connors (now known as Mike) clowns it up with Blaisdell on a *Voodoo Woman* set.



Alex and Ruth Gordon chat with Buster Crabbe on the set of *The Bounty Killer*.

All Photos: © AIP. Courtesy A.G.

Unreleased publicity shots from *Voodoo Woman*.

three-page story by Edgar Allen Poe, and our writer friends Mildred and Gordon Gordon, the best-selling authors and screenplay writers of *That Darn Cat* for Disney and *Experiment in Terror* for Blake Edwards, whipped it into a very exciting property.

I took it to Lester Salkow, the agent for Vincent Price, who read it and loved it, and together we shopped it around the various companies as a package, but nobody wanted it. We couldn't understand it. Price was a hot star and the script was a good one, but nobody wanted that type of period horror picture. Then Roger Corman put Price into *House of Usher* at AIP and followed it with several more of his well-known Poe pictures. We had submitted the package to AIP but had been turned down, so imagine my surprise when Roger announced *his* production of *Masque* for that company. He made it in England and there was a lawsuit because there were 86 points of similarity with our script and Salkow and Price were involved with the picture. Corman's writer, Charles Beaumont died before we got his deposition. I don't think Roger realized the similarities. Before it came to trial, AIP settled and paid, but we had lost a valuable property and the picture that I thought would propel me into the ranks of higher-budget producers. I went to Joe Levin's Embassy and produced two Westerns, *The Bounty Killer* and *Requiem for a Gunfighter*, and then to 20th Century-Fox for eight years.

There I was involved with a one-hour special on John Wayne and worked on all the film specials and compilations that involved old movies like *LIFE Goes to the Movies, That's Hollywood*, specials on Fox filmmakers like Darryl F. Zanuck. As their film historian-archivist, I was responsible for locating, in archives around the world, over 350 films that were presumed lost or burned in lab fires and explosions of nitrate material. This resulted in the "Golden Century" package of 50 classics, the re-showing of the films of Tom Mix, Will Rogers, Clara Bow and many other stars, and the work of such acclaimed directors as John Ford, Raoul Walsh, Frank Borzage, F.W. Murnau and others. "Rediscovering the American Cinema" was another of my projects.

In the field of horror and science fiction, I found *Chandu the Magician* with Edmund Lowe and Bela Lugosi, *The Spider* with Edmund Lowe, *The Last Man on Earth, Dante's Inferno, The Infernal Machine, It's Great to Be Alive* and *Just Imagine*, as well as *Sherlock Holmes* with Clive Brook and early Karloff and Lugosi performances in *Renegades, The Yellow Ticket, The Devil's in Love, Wild Company, Such Men Are Dangerous, The Silent Command* and Warner Baxter's *Six Hours to Live*.

Brother Richard

Meanwhile, my brother Richard was busy in England producing *First Man into Space, Fiend without a Face*, the aforementioned Karloff films *Corridors of Blood*, with Christopher Lee, and *The Haunted Strangler, The Dream Machine* with Rod Cameron, *The Projected Man* with Bryant Haliday from a story I got from my good friend Forrest Ackerman, *Island of Terror, Tower of Evil, Horror Hospital*. He is currently shooting *Inseminoid*, a script more terrifying and exciting than *ALIEN*, with Robin Clarke, Jennifer Ashley and Judy Geeson; Norman Warren directing.

The new horror pictures are so explicit and gory that it seems to me many of them are more disgusting than fun entertainment like the Karloff and Lugosi pictures of days gone by. Those films were effective and scary but left something to the imagination. It's like sex—one tires of it when everything is revealed on the screen. But perhaps you don't agree, and I would welcome your comments. I shall be taking off on a lecture/presentation tour shortly to visit many cities and talk about horror and science-fiction films and special effects and show some of my movies and extracts from others. I hope to have an opportunity to see many of you in person at that time. Meanwhile, if you like, I can tell you about other horror films—some you may remember and some that you have never heard of. Let me know if you are interested in such a column.

What would you like to know about the great horror films of the past? Ask Alex Gordon—send your questions to Alex Gordon, c/o FANGORIA magazine, 475 Park Avenue South, 8th floor suite, New York, NY 10016.

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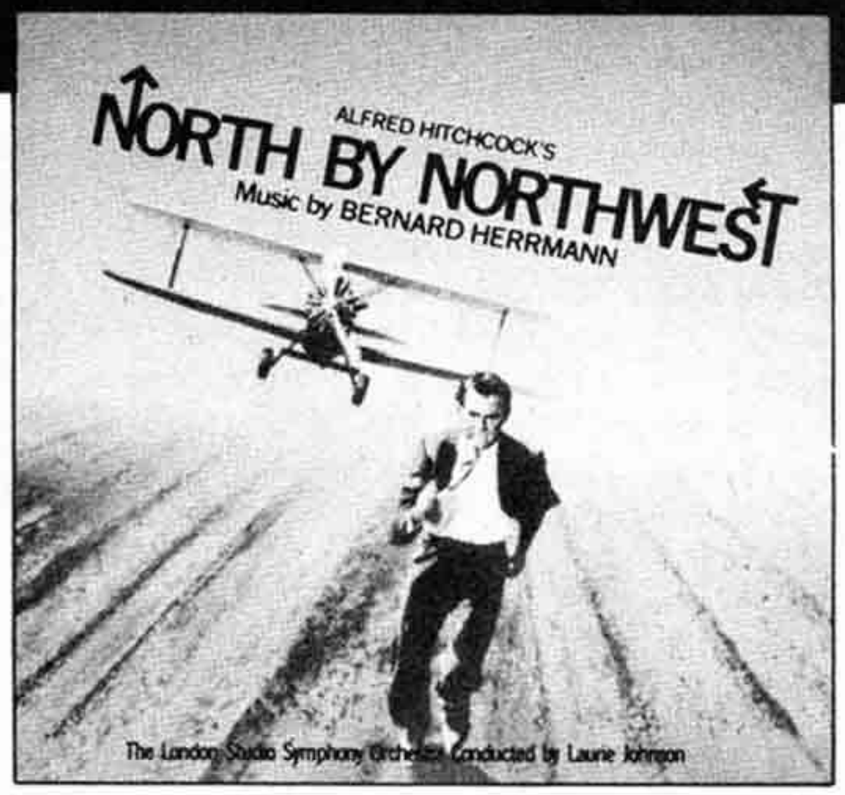
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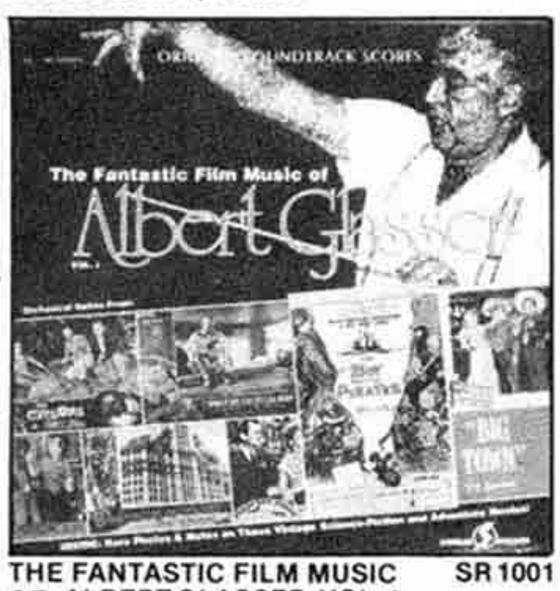

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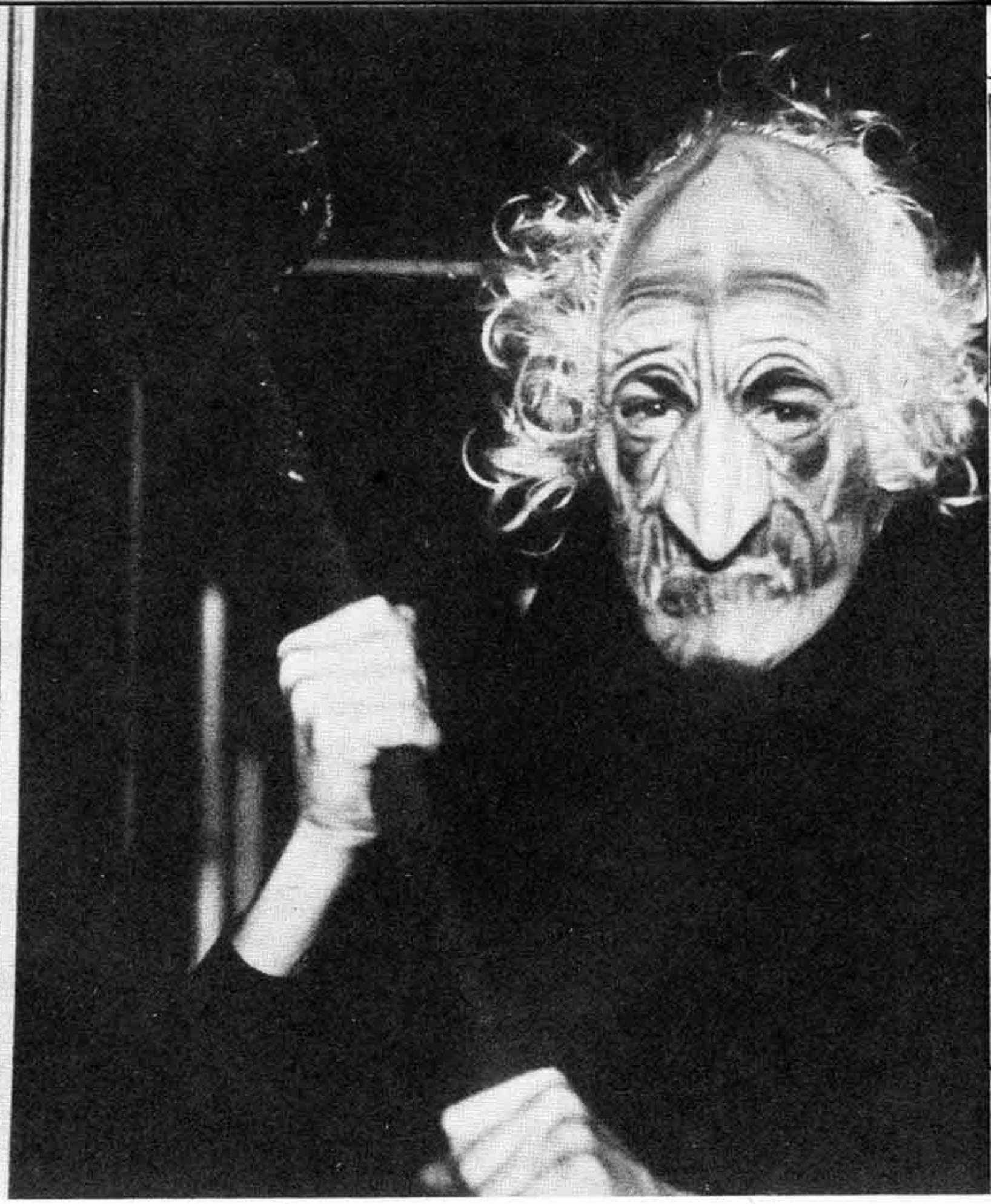
By JIM WYNORSKI



Join Jamie Lee Curtis for a one-way, non-s

TERROR T

Like many a good horror film, 20th-Century Fox's latest chiller, *Terror Train*, begins with a scream. Only this time it's the screach of a locomotive whistle bellowing somewhere off in the dead of night.

The brothers of Sigma Phi fraternity are celebrating New Year's Eve by throwing a raucous masquerade party aboard a chartered excursion train, complete with dance band, noisemakers, an illusionist, a well-stocked liquor cabinet . . . and a party crasher.

Unfortunately for the revelers, the uninvited guest happens to be a diabolically clever killer who assumes, in turn, the costume of each of his victims and then uses the disguise to lure his next target to a horrifying death.

A bone-rattling exercise in spooky doings, the Canadian-made *Terror Train* stars winsome Jamie Lee Curtis in her forth starring role since she appeared in director John Carpenter's *Halloween*. Hot on the heels of *The Fog* and *Prom Night*, her latest macabre effort promises to surpass all the rest in the suspense department.

"We set out to make a ghoulishly scary thriller," claims the 21-year-old actress, and the first step towards that goal was finding a train that would serve as the setting for most of the action.

Eventually, a vintage 1948 excursion model was leased from Steam Town in Bellows Falls, Vermont. This private foundation, which has one of the largest collections of working engines in the world, supplied the classic locomotive plus five passenger cars salvaged from the infamous Long Island commuter line. It was full steam ahead once the train arrived in Montreal just two weeks before the cameras were scheduled to roll.

But then an unsuspected hitch cropped up—where to store "the star" of the film. The crew and cast, including Academy Award winner Ben Johnson, were put up stylishly in nearby hotels; but where do you securely house an antique train overnight? No studio in all of Canada was large enough to accomodate the engine and its string of cars, so director Roger Spottiswoode decided to do most of his principal photography in a three-story warehouse located in the heart of the city.

Photo: © 1980 Avco Embassy

Curtis in *Prom Night*.

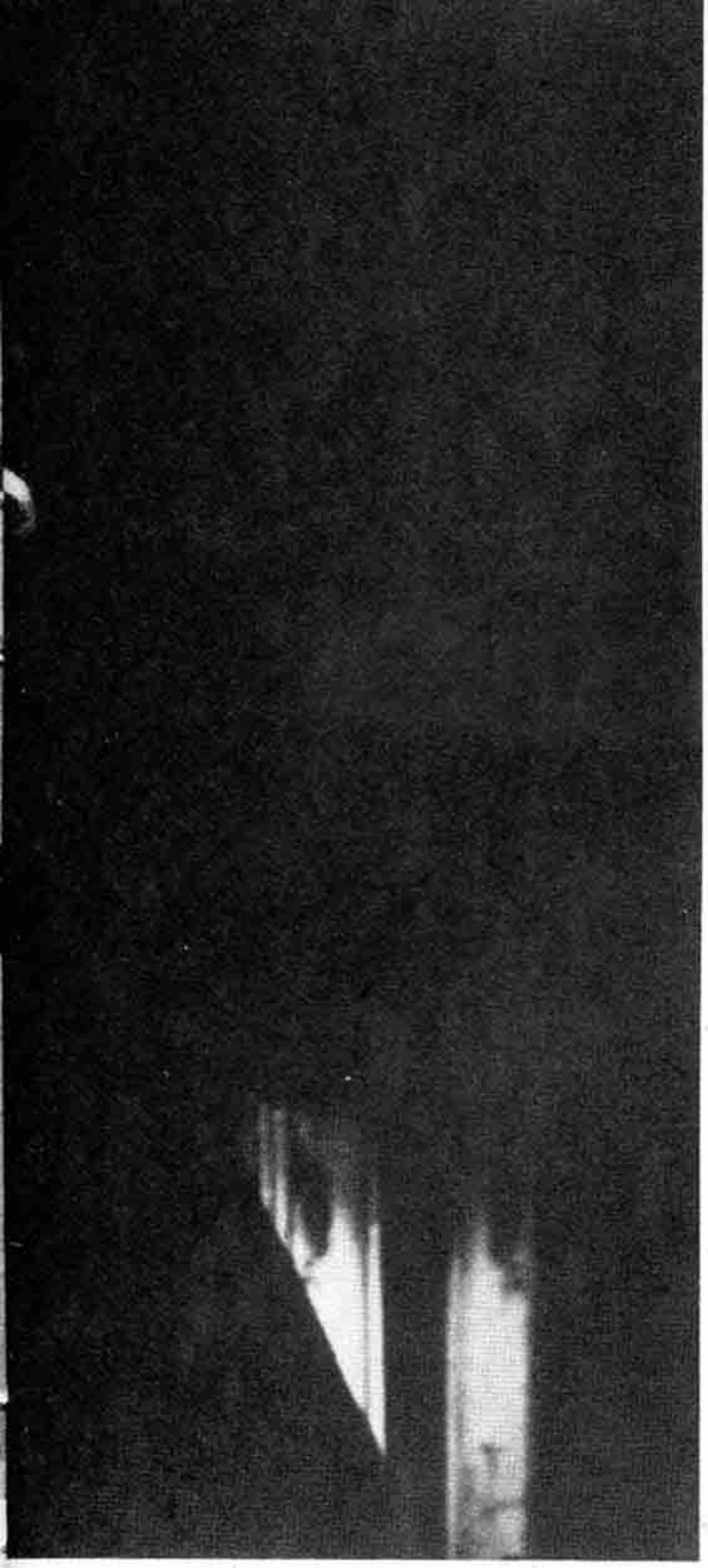
Nocturnal Filming

Because the building was active and quite noisy during the day, shooting could not begin until six or so in the evening, and would then continue on till dawn. Accordingly, the actors and production team had to completely re-adjust their normal sleeping habits to compensate for the nocturnal schedule.

"It was quite bizarre working under such unusual conditions," comments *Terror Train*'s director of photography John Alcott, whose impressive credits include cinematography on Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, *A Clockwork Orange* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. "Available space for equipment was severely limited in the passenger cars, so an elaborate camera dolly had to be constructed especially for the picture. Adding to the hysteria were the god-awful smoke machines and a stomach-churning mechanical rocker used to simulate car motion.

"The only bad thing about making a horror film," concludes Alcott, "is that sometimes it can become an off-screen nightmare as well!"

Of course, this isn't the first time terror has stalked the railways. Famed genre director Jacques Tourneur climaxed his 1957 horror classic *Curse of the Demon* with a stunning sequence on board a speeding British passenger train. In the



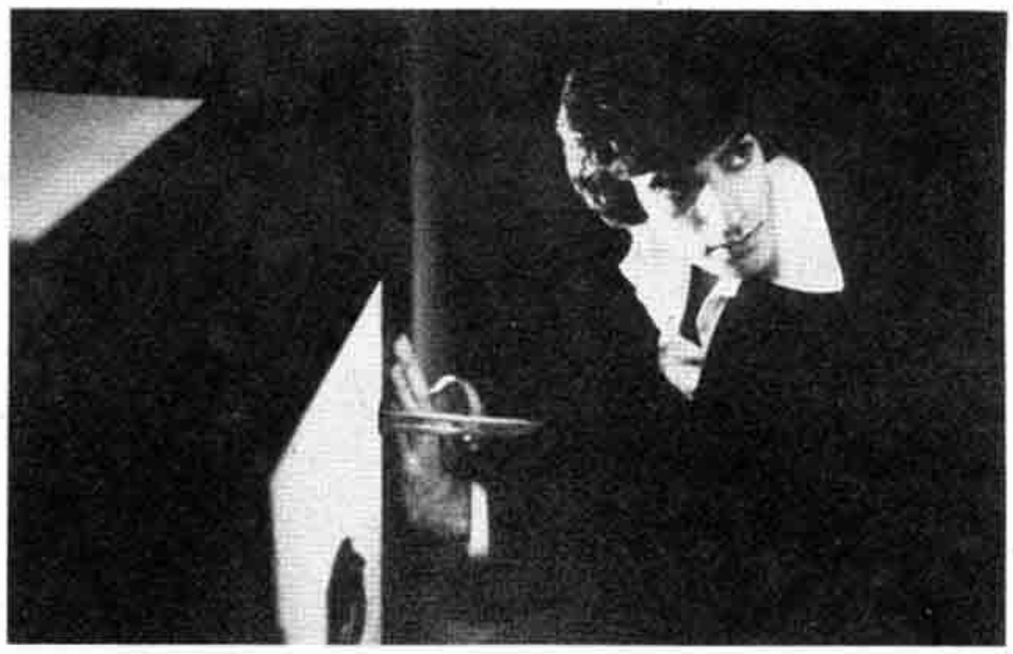
top journey on . . .

RAIN

Photos © 1980 20th Century-Fox

Terrified, Curtis confronts the crazed killer as the chilling choo-choo chugs on.

Magician David Copperfield supplies all the surprises on the Terror Train—until the dreaded diesel suffers an epidemic of bizarre murders.



Curtis is comforted by the alarming locomotive's conductor, Ben Johnson.

segment, magician-satinist Niall MacGinnie skillfully passes the Devil's death marker, or Rune, to good-guy Dana Andrews, who cleverly returns it to the villain without arousing suspicion. Later, at the station, a "possessed" engine menacingly stalks MacGuinnis around the freight yards and eventually dispatches him in a grand and gruesome manner.

The episode proved so memorable that playwright Richard O'Brien immortalized the moment in the opening lyrics to his underground smash *The Rocky Horror Show*.

Seven years later, the English film industry once again took to the tracks in 1964's *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*. It was the first of Amicus' vignette pictures, featuring a gallery of stars in short-short shock stories ala *Dead of Night*. Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing and a pre/M*A*S*H Donald Sutherland headed the list of doomed travelers in this one, all taking a one-way ride on a hell-bound train.

Lee and Cushing enjoyed the eerie trip so much that they booked passage on yet another "loco" locomotive, *The Horror Express*, a 1972 English-Spanish co-production which also starred Telly Savalas as the lead heavy. The intriguing story, adequately helmed by director Eugenio Martino, tells of an ancient alien intelligence that systematically, car by car, takes over a bullet-train rolling headlong across the snow-covered Russian plains. Originally titled *Panic on the Trans-Siberian*, the film ultimately suffered from a cut-rate budget and a severe case of poor dubbing.

Prop Hunt

Not so on the *Terror Train*, where, we are told, no expense was spared in the effort to create a rich, luxurious backdrop for the blood-spattered happenings. Production designer Glen Bydwell claims that prop-hunting at times assumed the dimensions of a 1940s detective novel, with he and his hearty assistants scouring the countryside for just the right *objects d'art*.

On one particular hazardous scavenger hunt, the group had to drive their cars into an old barn and sift through piles of junk with only their headlight beams to guide them.

"It was cold, dark and beginning to snow," remembers Bydwell, "but we needed 10 art deco ash trays by sunrise. We finally got 'em, too, but don't ever let

A Mini-Interview With Jamie Lee Curtis

Jeff Gelb, a correspondent for the WNBC-FM radio network, recently spoke with Jamie Lee Curtis for NBC's information and entertainment feature "The Source." At the same time, Jeff also prepared the following brief excerpt for readers of FANGORIA.

FANGORIA: What have you made since *The Fog?*

JAMIE LEE CURTIS: Three: *Prom Night*, which is out now. I did *Terror Train*, out in October, and it's wonderful. I did one for Avco Embassy called *Road Games*. I was "down under" in Australia for about two months. That is closer to a Hitchcock suspense film than a horror film. It's kind of like a *Rear Window* on the highway. Richard Franklin, the director, studied Hitchcock. He also went to school with John Carpenter. He did *Patrick* before this. The problem with that film is that the American distributors made him dub in American voices, and it ruined the film.

FANG: Are you getting uncomfortable with your image as the new queen of horror films?

JLC: Yeah. Horror films have been terrific for me because it's given me a career. But I've gotten a lot of flak for doing a lot of them. But my explanation is that no one else is hiring me. I've been up for numerous roles and these are the ones I've gotten.

I think I'm going to do *Halloween 2* and that'll be the end of it. I look at it as full circle. I've paid my dues, gotten my experience in films and done that genre. Now it's time to begin something else. It's much more natural to end that circle with *Halloween 2* than any other horror film. I'll work really hard and hopefully it'll be terrific. John and Debra Hill will oversee and write it, and Tommy Wallace, who was the editor on *The Fog* and art director on *Halloween*, is going to direct it. Tommy is very good, and I'm really excited about it. We're thinking of doing it in 3-D!

We won't be making it till next March, but I'm sure it'll be out next Halloween!

FANG: What about this wild rumor of your doing a sequel or remake to *Psycho?*

JLC: I'm not making a remake of *Psycho*. Someone in New York came up with that one. It was in the *New York Times* and someone sent it to me. No thank you! I couldn't do it.

Terror Train is a wonderful movie, though I don't like the title. I think it makes it sound cheap. It used to be called *Switchback*, which I thought was much better. But they do tests on titles so I suppose they know more than I do. But I hate that title.

Creatively on all levels it's done very well. The director is very good. John Alcott (the cinematographer from *The Shining*) shot it, so it automatically has a classy look. It's beautiful to look at. Hart Bochner from *Breaking Away* is in it; this guy is so gorgeous and such a sweet guy. He's going to be a big name. Ben Johnson is in it and is fabulous. I hope it's a big success.

FANG: What are your career goals?

JLC: I just want to keep going uphill at an even keel, gradually. I'm too young to want to get up there too high too soon; then you almost automatically take a plummet. If there's anything I want in this business, it's longevity.

I've reached goals already that I never thought I'd get to. What I'd like to work for is greater control in the sense of maybe producing. Debra has given me the incentive to want to do that. And I'd love to direct a movie. I'm taking a cinematography course this fall at UCLA because I want to learn more about the technical end of the camera.

FANG: Someday maybe you'll make your own horror film?

JLC: I don't know, because I can't see them. I am scared to death by them. I'm terrified by them. I saw *Death Ship* and freaked out; sitting in the corner with my jacket over my head and my hands in my ears. I can't watch them.

FANG: How do your own films affect you?

JLC: They're not scary to me because I know what's going to happen. But I'm living with a guy and lately we've been talking about how the films have gotten to be too much; slashing women with razors; butchering young women at proms. He feels my work endorses that; makes it okay. To a point I agree with him. But it's my job. It's not the type of film I'd go and see. But there are people who enjoy this sort of film. I'm not in the position yet that I can turn down a film because I don't believe in what it says. Hopefully that time will come.

anyone tell you that the movie business is all fun, games and glamor!"

The most reliable box-office asset of *Terror Train* is Jamie Lee Curtis did not decide to plunge into acting until her college years. Even then, her career choice was made partly as a lark: For a drama course, she decided to prepare a study on how to break into the business. She was as surprised as anyone when, in the course of her study, she landed a seven-year contract with Universal Pictures Television. She left college in order to pursue her accidental TV career, appearing in *Quincy, she deciColombo* and many others. Then she was chosen for a regular role in the television series *Operation Petticoat*, based on the film her father had starred in some 20 years earlier.

Though much of her television work consisted of one-liners and brief walk-ons, she considers that early experience invaluable, "almost a college education," she says. "Those actors who can create a real character from a one-line performance are the ones who'll succeed. To do this you have to invent a whole life for that character in your mind."

Although Debra Hill, producer of *Halloween*, wasn't sure that Curtis was right for that film's lead role, her agent's insistence got her an audition with John Carpenter. Needless to say, Curtis got the part—the rest is film history.

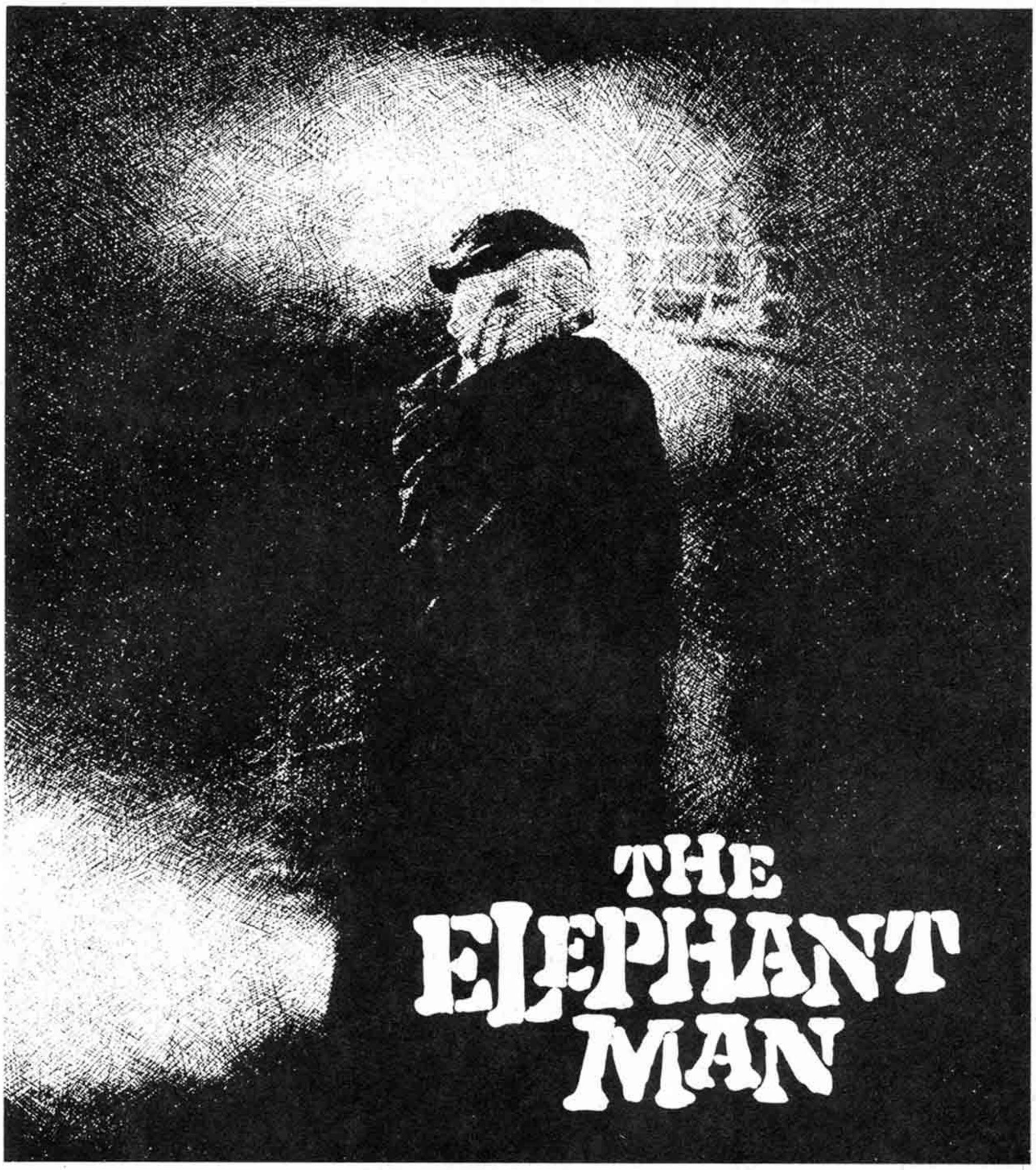
"Since then, I've basically played the same type of part in all my films. The girl I play in *Terror Train*, a college co-ed named Alana, is a bit stronger and more defined than those previous characters.

"Let's face it, there are certain things a heroine has to be. She has to be vulnerable, so the audience identifies with her, but she also has to have an enormous inner strength to overcome the evil, or terror, pursuing her."

So far, Curtis has run from the boogieman in *Halloween*, vengeful ghosts in *The Fog*, a deranged psychopath in *Prom Night* and now faces another masked killer in *Terror Train*. She's hoping now to snare a good role outside of the terror field—it's not that she dislikes being the modern queen of horror films, but she feels that it is time to demonstrate the wider range of her talents.

"It's too easy to topple back to the bottom when you haven't established yourself as a solid, talented performer," she says. "The biggest advantage of growing up in the business is knowing what mistakes not to make."

Whether Jamie Lee Curtis can succeed in her departure from terror roles is debatable; plans for *Halloween 2* seem utterly dependent on her appearance in the film, and rumor has it that Jamie Lee Curtis, along with her mother Janet Leigh and Tony Curtis, have all been made very lucrative offers on a possible future production to be called *Psycho 2*. Whatever course she chooses, it's certain that the best wishes of millions of fans will be with her.



Photos: © 1980 Paramount

It's not *a horror film.*

By BOB MARTIN

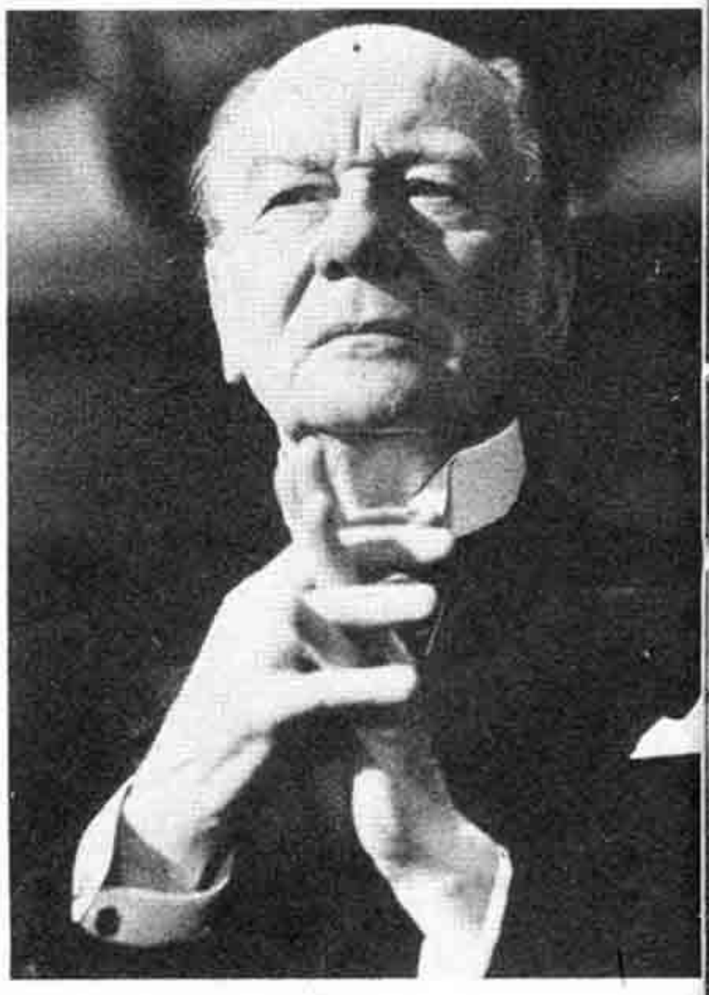
You won't be frightened by *The Elephant Man.*

You will be shocked and moved—perhaps even moved to tears. But you won't be frightened.

John Hurt, who appears in the title role, has it pegged. "*The Elephant Man* is not a horror film, as some might think," says Hurt. "It's really a love story."

You may already know the true story of John Merrick, known during his time as the Elephant Man. A victim of neurofibromatosis, Merrick was cruelly malformed from birth. Though early in life he was employed as a map-maker, his disease was soon so advanced that he could no longer hold a pen to paper, and he resorted to selling matches. Soon after, his beloved mother died and he placed himself in a workhouse for the poor. When he found the opportunity to pay his own way through life by taking a job as a circus freak, he took it. Eventually, this means of making a living was taken from him; the English courts ruled that displays of Merrick's deformities for profit were illegal. Rather than return to the workhouse, Merrick departed for the European continent where he continued to earn his keep by the only means available. Two years

Merrick returns to London from Europe, a cloak and hood concealing his mishapen form.



John Geilgud as the hospital's chief administrator.

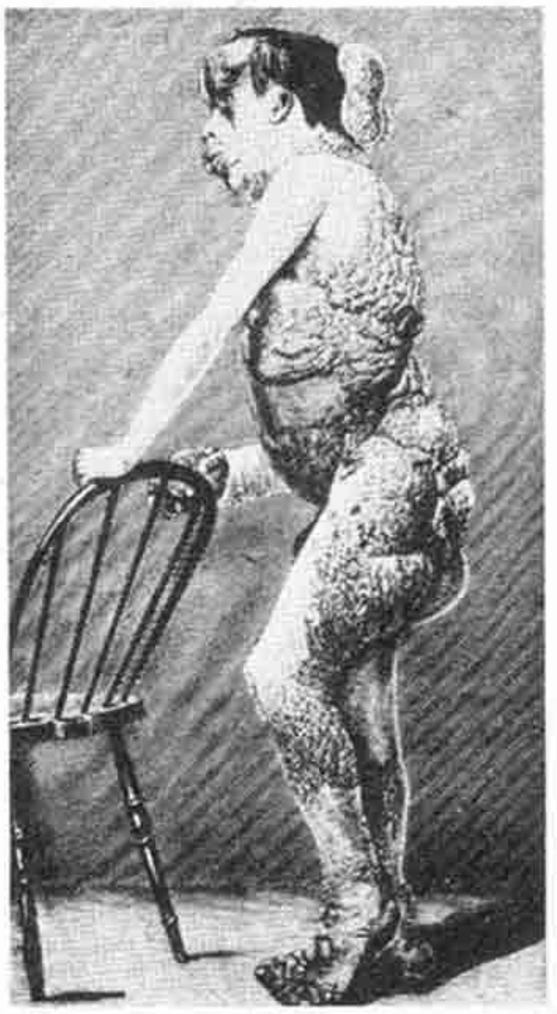
Anne Bancroft as Madge Kendal, the acclaimed actress who introduced Merrick to the theater world.

later, after being robbed of all his money in Belgium, he returned to England. There, one of his few close friends, a distinguished surgeon named Sir Frederick Treves, saw that his last years were comfortable. During this time, the Elephant Man became a celebrity, and was befriended by many highly regarded members of Victorian society, including the famous actress Madge Kendal. In 1890, at the age of 27, John Merrick, the Elephant Man, died.

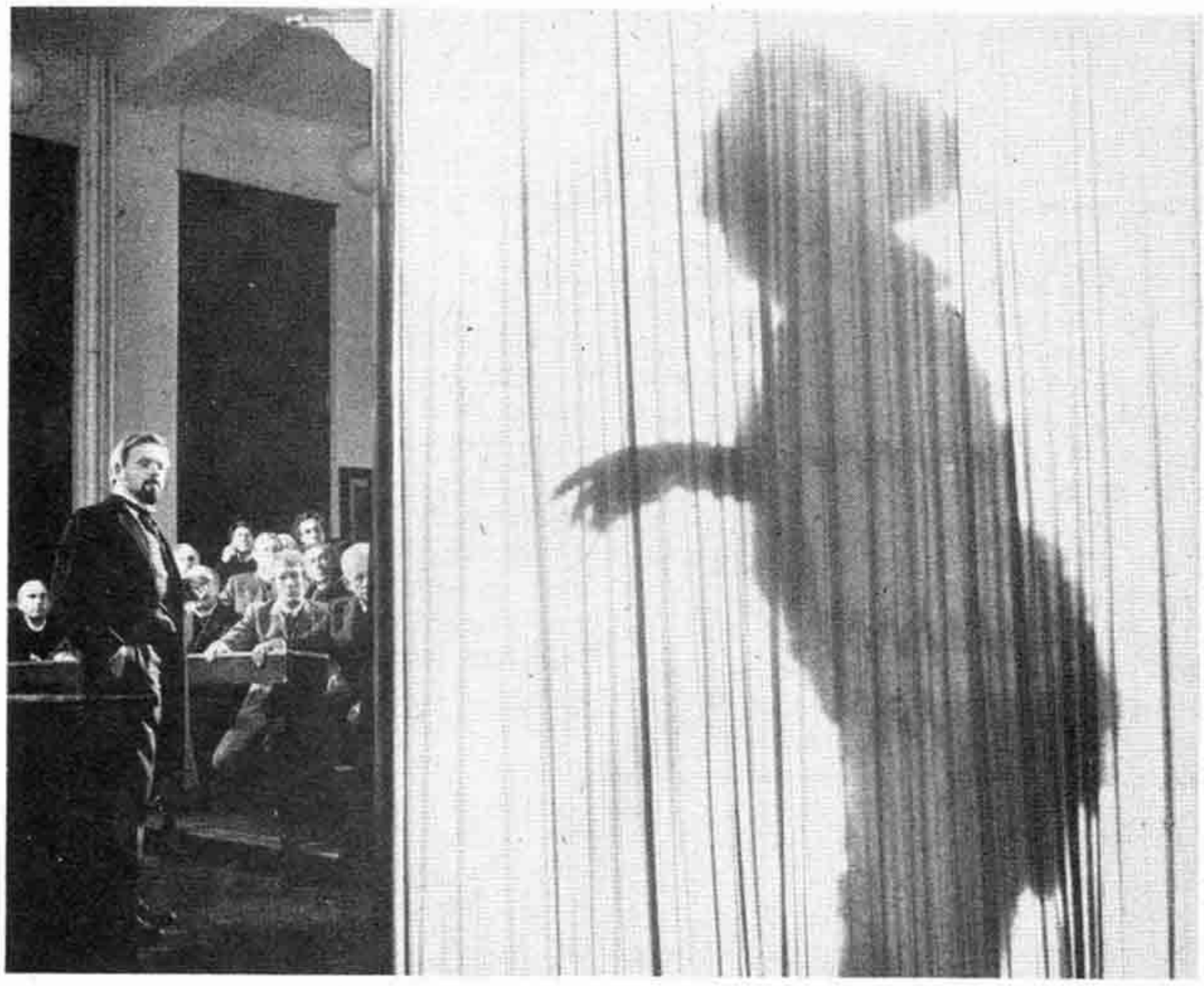
The screenplay of *The Elephant Man* follows roughly these same lines, with some liberties taken for dramatic effect. It is not a horror film; but, like the "horror" classics *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Elephant Man* looks behind one face of fear to find the humanity that all people hold in common.

Though much has been made of the fact that this film comes in the wake of a very successful Broadway play based on Merrick's life and bearing the same title, the first draft of the film's screenplay actually predated the play's opening. It was in mid-1978 that producer Jonathan Sanger first read the script by two young and unknown writers, Christopher DeVore and Eric Bergren. Sanger brought the script to Mel Brooks, who immediately decided to arrange for the film's financing through Brooksfilms, Limited, his own newly formed production company.

Despite some official disapproval, Dr. Treves offers Merrick a new home in an attic room at London Hospital.



Merrick, as pictured in *The British Medical Journal*, 1886.



Treves presents the Elephant Man to his medical colleagues.

Unknowns

Many people in the film industry were quite convinced that Brooks had lost his mind when it was announced that the film, written by two unknowns, was to be directed by another relative unknown, David Lynch. Of all the young directors in Hollywood, Lynch is perhaps the best example of a man who made his own opportunities. In 1972, while a student at the Los Angeles Center for Advanced Film Studies, Lynch wrote the script for *Eraserhead*, an outlandishly surreal fantasy that *seems* to be about mutant humanity and the last gasp of life-as-we-know-it. Lynch arranged his own financing for the film and, despite a grant from the American Film Institute, money problems delayed its completion for nearly five years. But you don't see the actors age that much in *Eraserhead*, because much of the film's narrative is carried not by actors, but by a series of bizarre props and mechanical effects as devised by Lynch. The resulting film is considered brilliant by some, and literally provokes headaches in others—but everyone agrees that it's a movie unlike any seen before. Luckily, *Eraserhead* won a distribution deal with Libra Films, the distributor that virtually created the midnight circuit with Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*. Though it took some time to catch on, *Eraserhead* is still bringing crowds to the midnight box office.

To select Lynch as director of *The Elephant Man* when *Eraserhead* was his sole feature credit was an act of courage for which Brooks and Sanger can be greatly commended.

Lynch, however, had his own doubts about the project at the start. "I was trying to raise money for a script called *Ronnie Rocket*," says Lynch, "but that was pretty much a specialty film, again. The studios wanted me to do something much 'safer' than that.

"I kept fighting against this, because I didn't want to work with anyone else's material. Finally, it looked like I was just going to be doing nothing, so I decided I'd rather be working than not working, and I'd better accept someone else's script."

It was shortly after making this decision that Lynch met Stuart Cornfeld of Brooksfilm, Ltd. "When he mentioned *The Elephant Man*, something just clicked," recalls Lynch, "and I asked to read the script."

Lynch liked the script; Sanger and Cornfeld had admired *Eraserhead*. A deal was made. Lynch, DeVore and Bergren collaborated on the final version of the script, while Sanger proceeded to assemble the cast.

The selection of John Hurt for the title role is remarkably logical when considered in light of his many past performances as misfortunate victims of cruel fate. One of his first starring film roles was as John Christie, an innocent man hung for murder in *10 Rillington Place*. More recently, he played a homosexual drug addict faced with life in a Turkish prison in *Midnight Express*. He was also the Emperor Caligula in TV's *I, Claudius:* a victim of his paranoid fantasies until stabbed to death by his own military guard. And, of course, his was the ghastliest demise in the celebrated SF-horror film *ALIEN*. All but the last of these dramas were based on real events; Hurt's ability to convey genuine vulnerability and psychic torment were well-documented.

Hurt was immediately advised that the role would require long hours under the hands of makeup man Christopher Tucker, and that neither his face nor his body would be recognizable beneath the pounds of latex prosthetics that he would wear for the part. Nevertheless, he immediately accepted the part upon reading the script.

Merrick, according to Hurt, was "obviously an amazing man. He was in constant pain, suffering from a disease that, to this day, remains incurable and he was destined for a very short life. But with the help of Frederick Treves and others, his enormous courage and quiet dignity enabled him to find some enjoyment in his last few years."

A Love Story

"It's a love story, and on several levels," continues Hurt. "Firstly between the Elephant Man and Treves, who runs into considerable professional opposition to his plans to help what, to so many of his colleagues, is just a circus freak. Then there's the curious relationship with Bytes, the man who 'owns' Merrick and puts him on public display. Outwardly they dislike each other, but they depend on each other for their livelihood. It's an extraordinary story."

Hurt's mention of Bytes refers to one of the few totally fictional characters appearing in *The Elephant Man*. In the film, Bytes keeps Merrick in squalor and ill health while putting him up for display. In fact, Merrick was on very good terms with his circus employers. In this case, the screenwriters' alteration of the facts of the case serves a good cause—the contrasts between the cruel and the humane, the differences between people and our common humanity are the very elements that make *The Elephant Man* such a powerful experience.

Sanger's other casting decisions were made with equally good judgment. Anthony Hopkins, previously seen in *Audrey Rose* and *Magic*, gives a fittingly low-key performance as Dr. Treves. Hopkins sees his role as that of "a nice, quiet man . . . a remarkable man who stuck his professional neck out for Merrick. He was genuinely concerned for him, and felt a real love for this other human being who was in a terrible predicament. I think this makes Treves a very full and rich man. Like all dedicated men, he was a bit of a fanatic, a bit eccentric, perhaps a bit blinkered, even. But a lovely man."

Filling out the cast are Anne Bancroft as the actress Mrs. Madge Kendal, Freddie Jones as the evil Bytes, Wendy Hiller as Mothershead, the chief nurse of the hospital where Merrick finds a new home, and Sir John Gielgud as Carr Gomm, the hospital's chief administrator.

The creation of special makeups for the film was assigned to Christopher Tucker, who is best known for his remarkable old-age makeups for such BBC television dramas as *I, Claudius, Edward VIII* and *Jenny*. On the big screen, his most notable recent achievement was the violent climax

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of *The Boys from Brazil*. Tucker is a relative newcomer to the field of makeup effects; he is now in his mid-30s, and makeup is his second career—he began as an opera singer, doing his own makeup for the stage. Reconstructing the appearance of the historical Elephant Man was undoubtedly his biggest challenge to date.

As a guide for the creation of his makeup, Tucker was provided with a series of photographs taken by Dr. Treves in the course of the doctor's study of Merrick's disease. The photographs made Tucker's difficult task a bit more clear, but certainly not much easier. Merrick's head was easily twice the size of the average man's. His right arm and hand were so disfigured as to resemble a large club. His back was covered by a series of folds of skin and cysts, which produced a constant rancid odor (this odor is mentioned several times in the film, though its source is never made clear).

At Merrick's death, a cast was taken of his head and shoulders, a cast which to this day remains the property of London Hospital, where Merrick spent his last years. Upon accepting the job, Tucker gained permission to borrow the cast. "I thought I'd make a copy of it for the film," says Tucker, "but when I got it to my studio and had a good look at it, I decided it was just too complicated. It would have required major facial surgery—a hammer-and-chisel job—on John Hurt, to remove bits of his jaw and cheekbones. Merrick's face was completely assymetrical; the jaw was twisted and deformed in such a way that I'd have to cut away a normal face to reproduce it. Apart from being a bit tough on John, it would have set the picture back a few years while he recovered from all the operations!"

In order to be properly fitted for his new headwear, actor Hurt was required to shave his entire head. After casting Hurt's head and reproducing it in clay, Tucker added further clay to the head, building it up to resemble Merrick's. This additional clay was divided into sections, 14 of them. From these sections, Tucker cast the molds used to make the latex prosthetics worn by Hurt in the film.

Makeup Problems

But "the complications don't end once you have made the molds," Tucker explains. "You don't just fill 'em up, take them out, and there they are—perfect. There are so many things that can go wrong. If you get little air bubbles in the wrong place, it's back to the drawing board."

The first time that Hurt was fully made up for his role, the process consumed a staggering nine hours. Later, when Tucker and Hurt had become accustomed to the routine, they were able to finish the task in five to six hours. Hurt's working day began at 5:30 a.m., and he was usually on the set, ready to work, by noon. During his workday, the makeup made it impossible for Hurt to eat, though he was able to drink through a straw. On days when he was feeling particularly fit, shooting would continue till as late as 11 p.m.

Despite his long history of "victim" roles, it soon became apparent that this schedule was too much punishment to take on a daily basis, even for John Hurt. It was arranged so that Hurt would only wear the makeup on alternate days; days in between were used for rehearsals and scenes that did not require Hurt in full makeup.

The Elephant Man, thanks to director Lynch and a talented cast and crew, is in many ways totally unlike any film before it. But, as we pointed out earlier, it does thematically recall such classics as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. In style, however, it most directly resembles Hammer Films at its best, in both its depiction of the stratified society of Victorian England and in certain touches of sly humor. How much stylistic borrowing was deliberately done by Lynch is not known (though we hope to ask him in a future interview). But the film does have one item in common with Hammer at its peak: Freddie Francis.

One of the Best

Francis has been one of Britain's best cinematographers since the 1940s. In the 60s, he became one of Hammer's most admired directors, at the helm of such productions as *The Evil of Frankenstein* and *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave*. After Hammer's demise, he continued directing, completing *Asylum* and *Tales from the Crypt* for Amicus Films. Francis was becoming more skilled as a director as time went on, and his films became equally more successful, by any standard.

"I realized that I was becoming a cult figure in horror films," Francis says today, "and nobody would back me to direct anything else." He stopped directing horror films, and for the last few years has been developing some projects of his own.

"I've had a wonderful time, although it hasn't been very profitable," Francis admits. His assignment as director of photography for *Elephant Man* came through producer Sanger's admiration for his similar work on such films as *Room at the Top*, *The Innocents* and *Sons and Lovers*. Francis' cinematography for the last of these won him an American Academy Award in 1960, a most impressive achievement for a filmmaker who has never worked in Hollywood. The beautiful black-and-white photography of *The Elephant Man* shows that Francis, at 53, is still growing in talent.

By the time you read this article, *The Elephant Man* will have opened in more than 600 theaters across the country. Critics will have praised it or panned it; filmgoers may be storming the box office or staying away in droves. We don't know. But we do know that if you don't see this film, you may be missing the most memorable film experience of a lifetime.

Another surprise blockbuster from a young independent filmmaker . . .

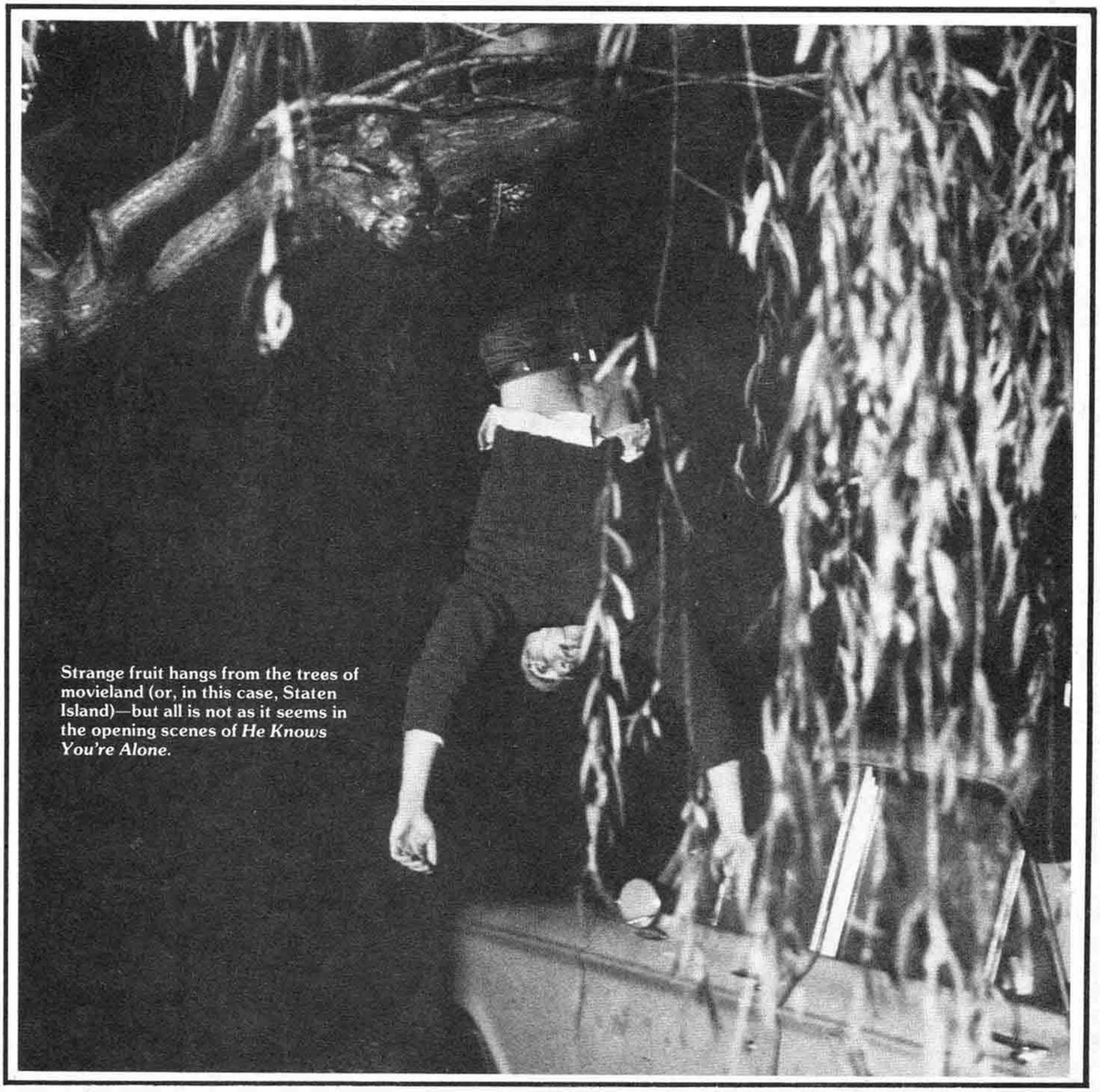
HE KNOWS YOU'RE ALONE

Armand Mastroianni interviewed by Leslie Horvitz

Planning on getting married someday? Then *don't* go to see *He Knows You're Alone*. In his first nationally released feature film, 30-year-old director Armand Mastroianni artfully proves that marriages can lead to things worse than divorce.

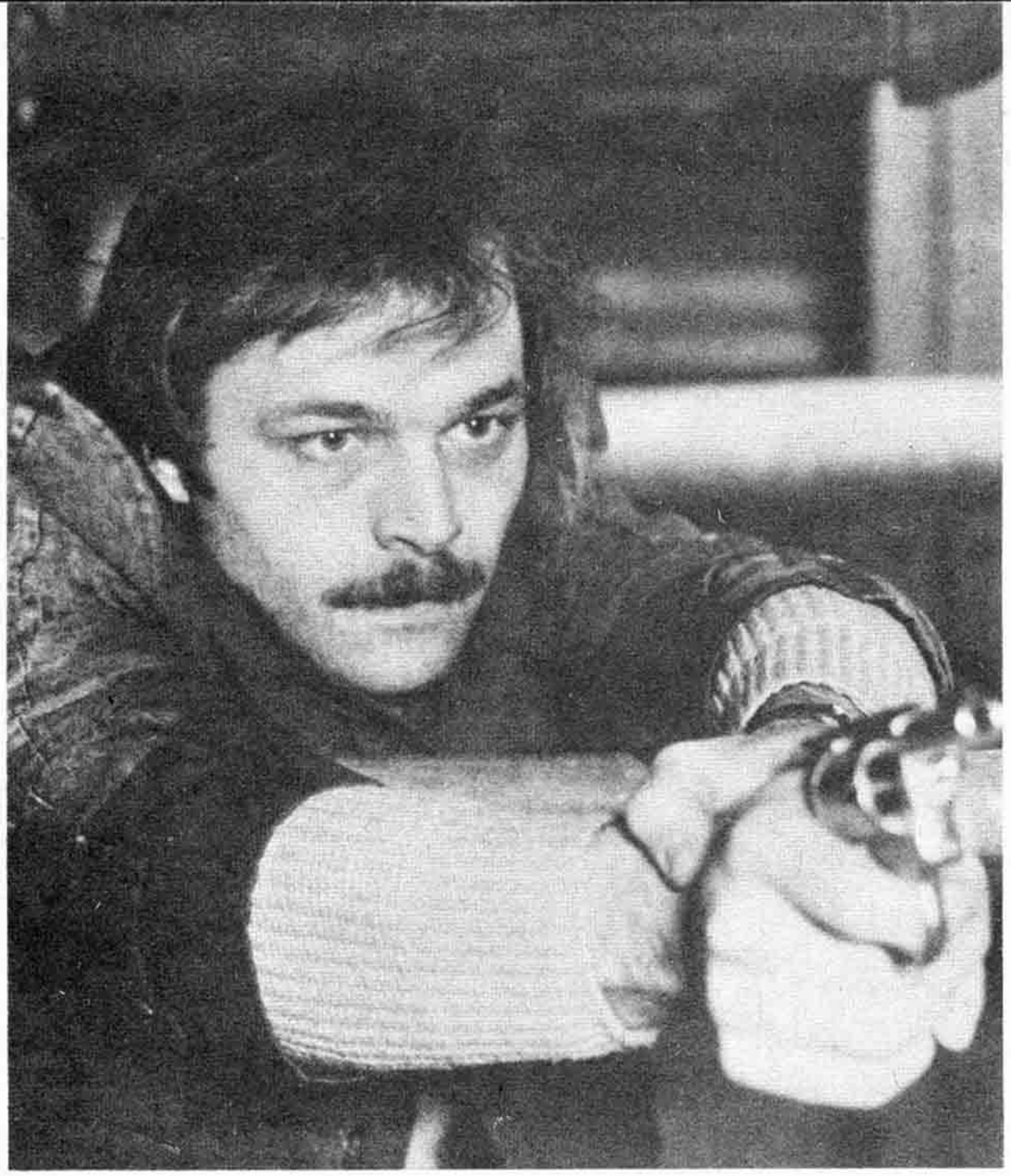
The film's story concerns a jilted lover who has developed a strange fondness for sharp objects. The frustrated Romeo stalks a quiet New York suburb, terrorizing brides, grooms, bridesmaids, best men and even the kindly old fellow who makes the bridal gowns. And he's liable to turn up anywhere—in an amusement park, in the tarnished glory of an old art-deco movie house, in a church, a suburban home and finally—and most appropriately—in a city morgue.

"The concept I went in with," says the director, "is that I wanted to give people a roller-coaster ride. When you ride the roller-coaster you know you're in for a lot of jumps and hills and unexpected things." Unexpected things is right. In *He Knows You're Alone*, people are always doing unexpected things or turning up in unexpected places—parts of them do anyhow. Just when you expect the psychopath to leap out of the shadows, a perfectly innocent character appears, having, of course, absolutely no idea what he—or she (and it's usually the latter)—has stumbled into.



Strange fruit hangs from the trees of movieland (or, in this case, Staten Island)—but all is not as it seems in the opening scenes of *He Knows You're Alone*.

Photos: © 1980 United Artists



Lewis Arlt as a heroic cop in search of the maniacal killer.

The editing makes a major contribution to the story's impact, just as it did with John Carpenter's horror epic *Halloween*, to which the film owes a certain debt. It's as tight as a hangman's noose—and just as effective. "I did not want to be very graphic in the killings," avers Mastroianni, "I thought what was more important was building up to it. I wasn't interested ... in knives entering people and blood spattering out of them."

There's still enough blood being spattered, though, to keep audiences perched on the edge of their seats—that is if they haven't decided to bolt for the nearest exit before any further mayhem can be committed on screen.

Childhood Terror

As a youngster, Mastroianni delighted in telling tales of horror to members of his Boy Scout troop as they huddled around the campfire on summer nights. By the time he was through, they'd be afraid to go to the john by themselves for fear of what might be out there lurking in the woods.

He's still doing it. After a recent screening in Manhattan, some of the director's friends spotted a woman at a neighboring bar who had just come out of the movie. Tears were streaming down her cheeks, her face was ashen and her hands were shaking so much that she could barely lift her cup of coffee to her lips. Asked what was the matter, she confessed that after having seen *He Knows You're Alone*, she became so frightened that she could not bear to go home by herself, let alone stay put once she got there.

Armand Mastroianni is a short, youthful, slightly plump man who looks like the sort of guy you wouldn't mind running into at the local saloon and having a couple of beers with. He's affable and outgoing and maybe a bit overwhelmed by his sudden success. After all, this is what he's struggled for since he was a high school student toiling on short silent 8mm and 16mm films on Staten Island. He still lives on Staten Island. That hasn't changed. But a number of other things have.

It was on Staten Island—Richmond College to be exact—that Mastroianni received his basic education in films and it was there that he shot his first efforts. "My thing was always to tell a story. ... Everyone else was always shooting scenery ... or their grandmother. And I was always the one to go out and say, 'Let me tell a story.' "

Of course, to tell his stories, Mastroianni has to settle for shoestring budgets. Until now, this is the kind of budget he knows best. Some of these youthful films were entered in festivals; the awards that they earned, even if there wasn't much money attached, at least indicated to him that he was heading in the right direction.

His first major movie was a comedy—*Sophie and Bernie*. Eighty minutes long, it was entered in a Ford Foundation festival in New York. Among the judges was director Otto Preminger. He was greatly impressed with Mastroianni's work. "'I vant to see this filmmaker,'" Mastroianni quotes Preminger as saying, "'I vant to see him.'"

What Preminger wants, he gets—sometimes. He saw him.

Temporary Shelter

Preminger took Mastroianni under his wing, though that proved to be but a temporary shelter. He met a number of studio executives, held a number of friendly conversations, but otherwise "nothing came out of it except that it was ego-gratifying." *Sophie and Bernie* didn't die exactly; it was pensioned off to Home Box Office and pay television.

After graduating from Richmond, Mastroianni invested $3,500 in a 30-minute short which was intended to be a proposal for a feature-length project, a more innovative idea for selling a studio on a story than a script, but not exactly an idea whose time had come.

Francis Ford Coppola, with whom Mastroianni had struck up a good friendship, advised him that the best way of breaking into the business was to sit down and write a script and keep writing them until one of them sold. Mastroianni did exactly that; with a playwright friend of his, he penned a drama about two Italian families in Brooklyn; it received considerable recognition but no sale. Part of the problem was that Mastroianni wanted to direct. Shorts were one thing, features were quite another. Studios weren't willing to take the chance on him.

"Then a friend of mine, George Manasse, who is a line producer and production manager and has done numerous pictures in New York, said, 'Why don't you do a thriller? There seems to be a big thing for thrillers.' I said, 'What am I going to do, sit down and write another script and have everyone say no, no, no? What guarantee can you give me that it's going to be done?'

"He said, 'I'll call you back in five minutes.' And sure enough, he called me back in five minutes and said, 'You've got a deal.' I said, 'A deal for what?' He said, 'Well, come with me tomorrow.'

"'George, where are we going?' He said, 'Just be quiet, come with me tomorrow.'"

Their mysterious destination proved to be the offices of producers Edgar Lansbury and Joseph Beruh, who've done prestige items like *Godspell* for Broadway; on the big screen, they had produced the minor cult classic *Squirm*.

"So I sit in their office ... and George says to them, 'Armand has a fantastic idea for a thriller.' And I had this lump in my throat, because I really had nothing."

Meanwhile, Lansbury is busy peeling an apple, looking very preoccupied—though not by Mastroianni; his partner is talking

on the phone, barely paying attention to the visitors.

Lansbury told him to begin the story.

"I said, 'Well, it starts off with a car parked off in the woods and this guy and girl are going at it very heavily in the back seat ... and the camera becomes an observer from the outside....' I started making up this story as I was going along." Lansbury's still peeling his apple, and Beruh's still busy talking on the phone.

After improvising for several minutes, Mastroianni concluded, "I said, 'Da-da-da, that's the end!' Dead silence. Then Lansbury says, 'That's fantastic!' The other guy's shaking his head. He says, 'Who are you with?' I told him William Morris. . . . I walked out of there and I said to George, 'Did this happen? Did they really *like* it?' Sure enough, that afternoon they called my agent and struck the deal."

On Again, Off Again ...

To aid him in writing the story that he'd invented on the spot, Mastroianni recruited his old friend, playwright Scott Parker, who'd just completed *Die Laughing* for Robbie Benson.

They got the script finished. There was someone already down in Houston, where it was to be filmed, doing the preproduction work, and four weeks remained until shooting. Then, at the last moment, Lansbury and Beruh announced that the deal was off. They'd shown it to a number of potential investors and none was interested.

Mastroianni refused to be daunted. He dragged George down to a corner diner, sat him down and said he was able and willing to make the film for half the budget originally proposed—and even that was pretty low to begin with; in the neighborhood of half a million. Rather than shoot the film in Houston, Mastroianni suggested they do it on Staten Island, a place he knew intimately. Manasse was dubious but agreed to go along with him. They then returned to their producers and told them of the bargain they'd reached. Lansbury and Beruh were equally skeptical, but in the end they agreed, but only after additional rewrites were done to placate them.

Two weeks before shooting began, Mastroianni was still casting, shuttling between Staten Island and Manhattan trying to fit all the pieces—and the people to go with them—together.

The film was shot in 24 days. "I had always disciplined myself in high school and college to work with nothing. I started off with absolutely nothing. So in a way the discipline helps ... having too much [money] can make you lazy. ... You just have to tighten your belt." But though his budget could be eaten by a film like *Superman* in half a week's time, he still had something *Superman* didn't have: the support of his non-union cast and crew. "It became a fun experience to work on, it became the same kind of experience as working on college films."

One of the elements the director wanted to inject into his project was humor. People laugh—out of terror and giddiness—when they're on a roller-coaster. By the same token, they should be able to laugh while they're being scared half to death by a movie.

Some of the humor is almost self-mocking. As the heroine Amy (Caitlin O'Heaney) stands in line with her friends waiting to purchase tickets to an amusement park, the conversation turns to horror movies. Inevitably, one character expresses something close to contempt for them, simultaneously sending up the people who put the story together and the audience watching it—but delighting them at the same time. Everyone, after all, is in on the joke.

Subversive Humor

This subversive sensibility pervades the film, right from the very opening moments; periodically you are hit over the head with the fact that this is only a movie, a bit of celluloid magic, nothing to take seriously at all. But while the intellect registers this information, your body refuses to. Your blood pressure's still building, your heart's

(continued on page 56)

Below left: The bride-to-be (Caitlin O'Heaney) suffers from acute anxiety as she is fitted for her bridal gown. She later learns that there are actually some things *worse* than marriage as, below right, she is stalked by a knife wielding maniac (Tom Rolfing).

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Leslie Stevens Interviewed,

Part One.

From "Keeper of the Purple Twilight," the story of an alien scientist who investigates human emotion—and falls in love.

A big smile from writer-director-producer Stevens.

By STEVEN SWIRES

In the razzle-dazzle high-tech world of contemporary special effects-oriented science fiction on television, the late lamented *Outer Limits* stands out as a distinctly different approach to filmed fantasy. An anthology series broadcast by ABC for 49 episodes during 1963-1965, *Outer Limits* emphasized the subtle evocation of SF and fantasy concepts as "morality plays," with the focus on believable characterization, adult dialogue, imaginative photography and an ever-present "control voice" passing judgement on human foibles. Surprisingly, the creator and executive producer of the program was Leslie Stevens, best known to today's TV audience as the original supervising producer of *Battlestar Galactica* and *Buck Rogers*.

By no means a science-fiction specialist, Stevens received his first taste of show business through a teenage association with Orson Welles. He subsequently achieved early success as a Broadway playwright and then branched out into television, writing for *Playhouse 90* among other shows. A move to Hollywood resulted in his first motion-picture assignment as screenwriter of Arthur Penn's feature film directorial debut *The Left-Handed Gun*, a psychological Western starring Paul Newman as Billy the Kid, based on an original script by Gore Vidal.

Stevens advanced his career by writing, producing and directing two films, *Private Property* and *Hero's Island*, both featuring Warren Oates, who would later guest star in *The Outer Limits*. Returning to television, he formed his own independent company, Daystar Productions, through which he created and produced the Jack Lord *Stony Burke* series for ABC. A year later he launched *The Outer Limits*, and 15 years after its cancelation, it remains his most notable achievement.

In the years since, Stevens has been predominantly associated with Universal Studios Television as the initial executive producer of such series as *It Takes a Thief*, *McCloud* and the Tony Franciosa episodes of *The Name of the Game*. More recently, he worked on two short-lived SF-adventure programs, *The Invisible Man* and its equally unsuccessful clone, *The Gemini Man*. Brought into *Galactica* by its creator and executive producer, Glen A. Larson, Stevens spent a year on the project, after which he again assisted Larson as supervising producer and co-writer of the *Buck Rogers* TV-movie-cum-feature film. He is also credited as co-developer with Larson of the *Buck* series spin-off. Last year he left Universal for 20th Century-Fox Television, where he prepared a six-hour mini-series version of Jacqueline Susann's best-selling novel, *Valley of the Dolls*, for broadcast by CBS. Most recently, Stevens had a hand in the rewrite of a script for Bo Derek's new film, *Change of Seasons*.

In view of such a disparate track record, *The Outer Limits* is Stevens' only genuinely innovative contribution to the fantasy field. Still in syndication in many parts of the country, the series has inspired a loyal and growing cult following and is generally regarded as a landmark of its type, fully on the same level of quality as such classics as *The Twilight Zone* and *Star Trek*. Why the man responsible for its creation has never again matched its excellence is only one of the ironies that have become a fact of life in commercial American television.

In the following exclusive interview, Stevens reveals some of the behind-the-scenes problems involved in producing a series which was clearly years ahead of its time.

FANGORIA: It must have been a great thrill for you to have been associated with Orson Welles when you were so young. How did that come about?

LESLIE STEVENS: I won a playwriting contest when I was in high school, and part of the prize was to be with Orson's Mercury Theater Company in Washington, D.C. I became his "go-fer" when I was 15, in 1939, and worked for him for about a year. I held his script while he spoke to the cast, and I sat next to him and hunted for the page in Shakespeare, or whatever play we were doing. I'd also run out and get coffee, and hang around the theater. I *lived* in the theater, in fact, in Washington and in the Chestnut Street Opera House in Philadelphia.

To be near Orson, to really get it firsthand, to see him operate and watch him run a company, and to be with all those fine actors in good shows was a great start for me. I actually dropped out of high school and ran away from home to be with Orson, but eventually the truant officers tracked me down. My parents made a deal with them so I could finish out my year with him and then go to summer school.

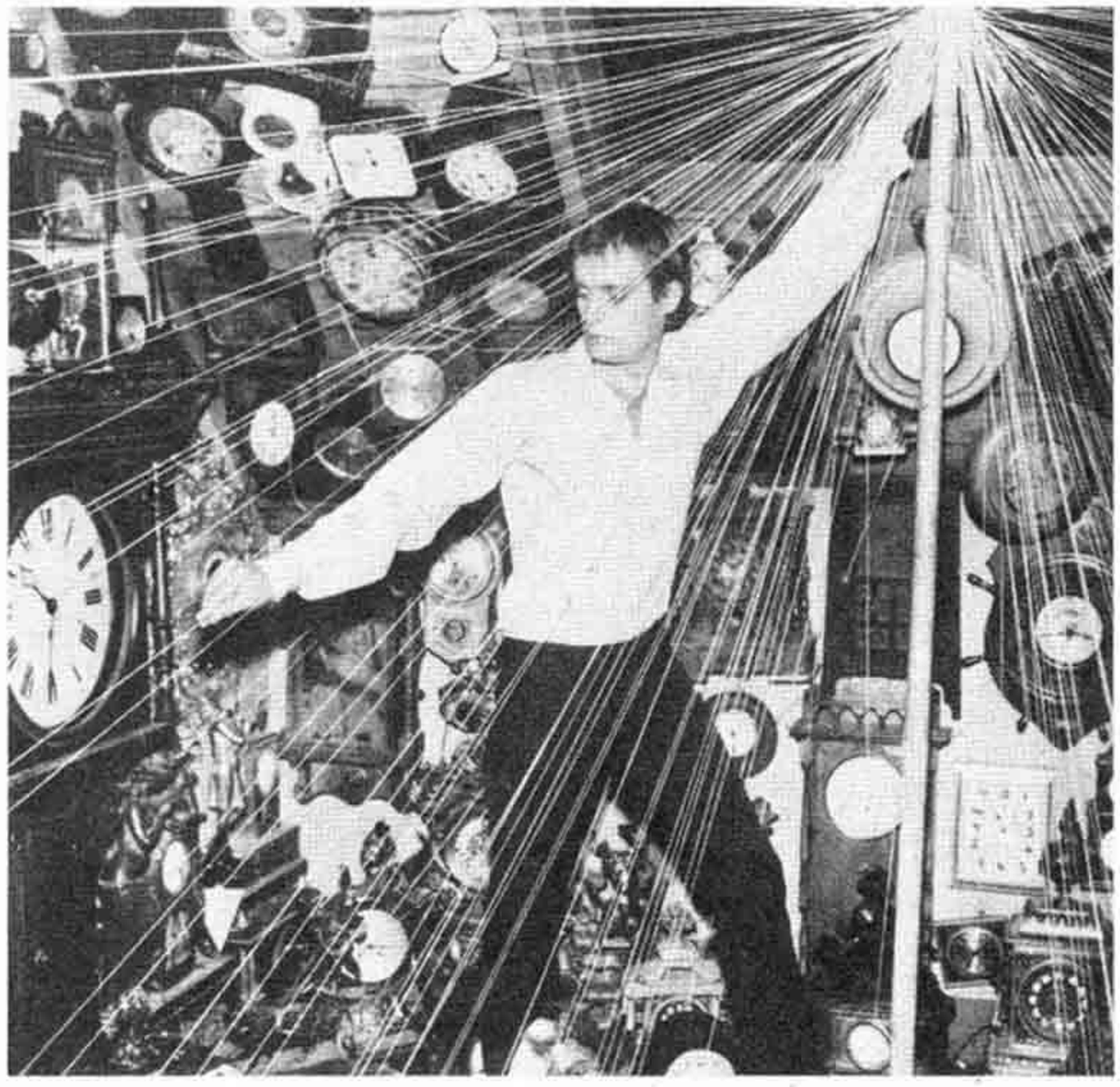
FANG: Apparently some of Welles' integrity and creativity had a lasting influence on you, because many people believe *The Outer Limits* to be the finest fantasy series in the history of television. Considering its unor-

ALL PHOTOS: ABC TV

An alien from Ebon prepares to interrogate Earthling captives in "Nightmare." Joseph Stefano wrote the script; Martin Sheen was a featured cast-member.

Warren Oates, "The Mutant"—an ambitious scientist turned psychokiller.

David McCallum and a machine that returns the dead to life—"The Forms of Things Unknown," written by Stefano.



thodox approach, how did you ever get it on the air?

STEVENS: Basically, just by talking. I had created and produced the *Stony Burke* series for ABC through my own company, Daystar Productions, and I got to know Daniel Melnick, who later became the president of Columbia Pictures but was then ABC's programming chief on the West Coast. I talked to him a lot about science fiction, and how I thought it would be a good idea for an anthology series. I always felt the subject itself had a great deal of stature, but it was dismissed in the old days as being trivial and silly. People didn't even know what *science* was, much less *science fiction*. He said, "Okay, let's try it," and gave me the go-ahead to do the pilot episode, which was *The Galaxy Being* with Cliff Robertson. I wrote and directed it, and then Joseph Stefano came on as the producer.

FANG: The original title of the series was *Please Stand By*. Why was it changed?

STEVENS: The network thought *The Outer Limits* was a catchier title. I thought that station hold of "Please Stand By" was dramatic, but they weren't ready for that in those days.

FANG: How early in the preproduction stage did Stefano become involved?

STEVENS: He came in just a couple days before we started shooting. He was not particularly involved in the first episode, but right after that he took over very strongly. I gradually segued out of it to go do pilots for the Daystar Company, and he really ran everything with a firm hand.

FANG: Why didn't you produce the show yourself?

STEVENS: I was a quadruple hyphenate. I was the president of the company and the executive producer, and also a writer, producer and director. In order to keep the product going we had to have *The Outer Limits* plus

The Canons of The Outer Limits

Shortly after Joseph Stefano was hired as line producer for *The Outer Limits* (at the time, still known as *Please Stand By*), Leslie Stevens requested that he draw up a set of guidelines for prospective writers to follow in preparing their scripts. The result proved to be a concise statement of the quality always strived for (through not always attained) during the course of the series.

These are the Canons of *The Outer Limits:*

If you believe in something, if you are angry or disturbed about something, or exasperated with joy or shaken with worry about something, be it Conformity, or Discrimination, or Politics, or Censorship, be it Patriotism, or Capital Punishment, or Disarmament, or Man's Inaccessability to Man, or Fame, or Famine, or Moral/Physical Slavery, or Addiction, or Mass Culture, or Fanaticism, or Isolationism, or Peace—if you believe in your need to state your belief, you have the thread [of a story theme]. And all the rest is craft and art and intellect.

A high literary style encompassing the bold use of poetic imagery and stunning language is entirely fitting and not unnatural to the Science Fiction form. The very awesome and wondrous nature of Science, especially when fused with imaginative and inventive Fiction, would seem to beg and perhaps inspire high-level thinking and writing.

Each play must have a Bear. The Bear is that one splendid, staggering, shuddering effect that induces awe or wonder or tolerable terror, or even merely conversation and argument.

The viewer will follow and care about and at times even identify with a "monster" or an embodied "element" or a strange and unwordly "creature," but this identification cannot be sustained if the viewer is asked to view monsters and elements and creatures exclusively.

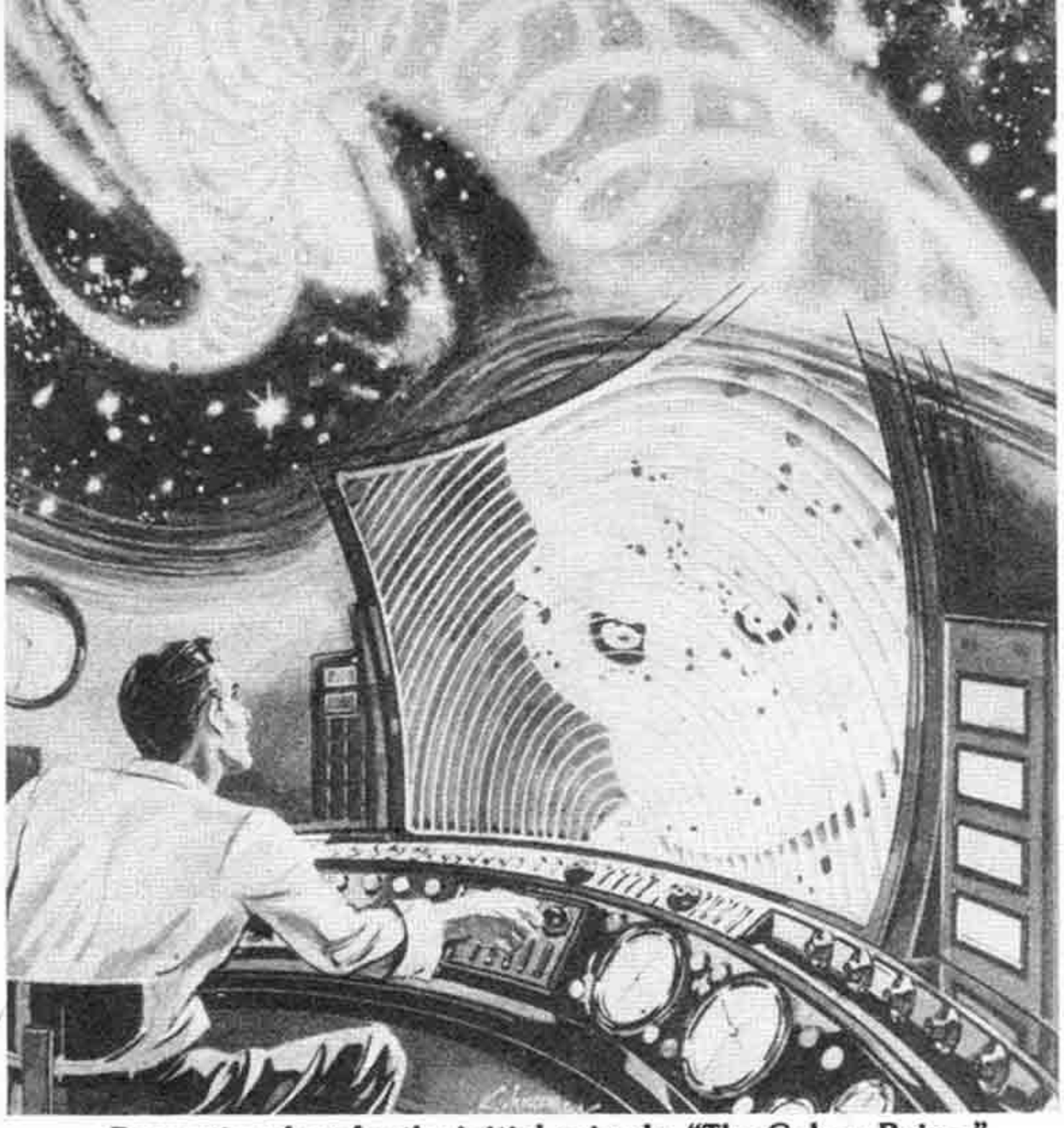
Somewhere the viewer must see himself; and while he may see himself or a part of himself in a monster, he will resist and lose interest unless we provide him with a real and human and recognizable hero-figure (or non-hero figure as the case may be).

There must be no apology, no smirk; each drama, no matter how wordless or timeless, must be spoken with all the seriousness and sincerity and suspension-of-disbelief that a caring and intelligent parent employs in the spinning of a magic-wonderful tale to a child at bedtime. Humor and wit are honorable; the tongue in the cheek is most often condescending and gratuitous. When the tongue is in the cheek it is almost impossible to speak in anything but a garbled, foolish fashion.

With a theme deeply felt, a style carefully wrought, characters and basic situations that are hard—real and identifiable—with these, all that can be said, can be said within the exciting, imaginative, Universe-wide framework of Science Fiction. No idea, no message or statement or plea is beyond the scope of such a framework. The research required to set a particular story in the setting of Science Fiction is not greater nor harder to attain than that research which is necessary to set the same theme in a hospital or a court of law or the dusty chutes of a rodeo.

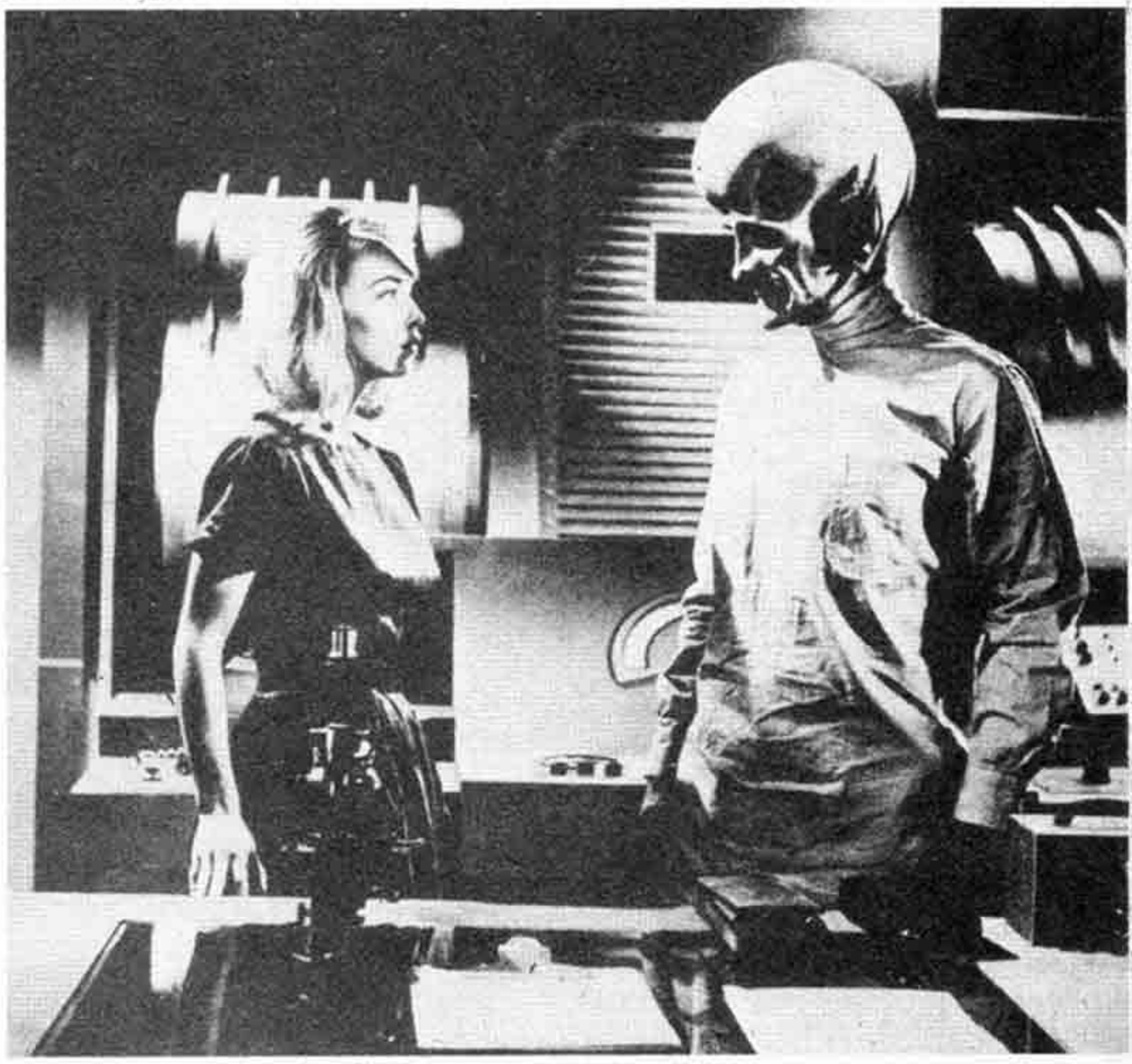
All that is required by *Please Stand By* is the theme.

And the craft and art and intellect.



Promotional art for the initial episode, "The Galaxy Being," written, directed and produced by Stevens.

McCallum again—as an evolved human mutation in "The Sixth Finger."



some other programs, so I was busy working on spin-offs. I tried to keep everything moving by being sort of an "advance scout" and developing new material, while other people ran the existing projects. I came back and wrote and directed three more episodes, "The Borderland," "Controlled Experiment" and "Production and Decay of Strange Particles," to make sure the series was on the right track, but I generally acted as the executive producer over a running line group.

FANG: "Controlled Experiment" was a rare example of science-fiction humor, but I understand it was actually created out of an economic necessity.

STEVENS: Yes, it was really done because we were up against it in terms of the budget. I occurred to me that if we had an overlapping story, we could shoot it simultaneously with slow-motion and regular-motion cameras, splice the footage in all different directions and film the episode in four days—which we did.

FANG: Where did you find the special-effects technicians who made up Projects Unlimited, which created many of your best effects?

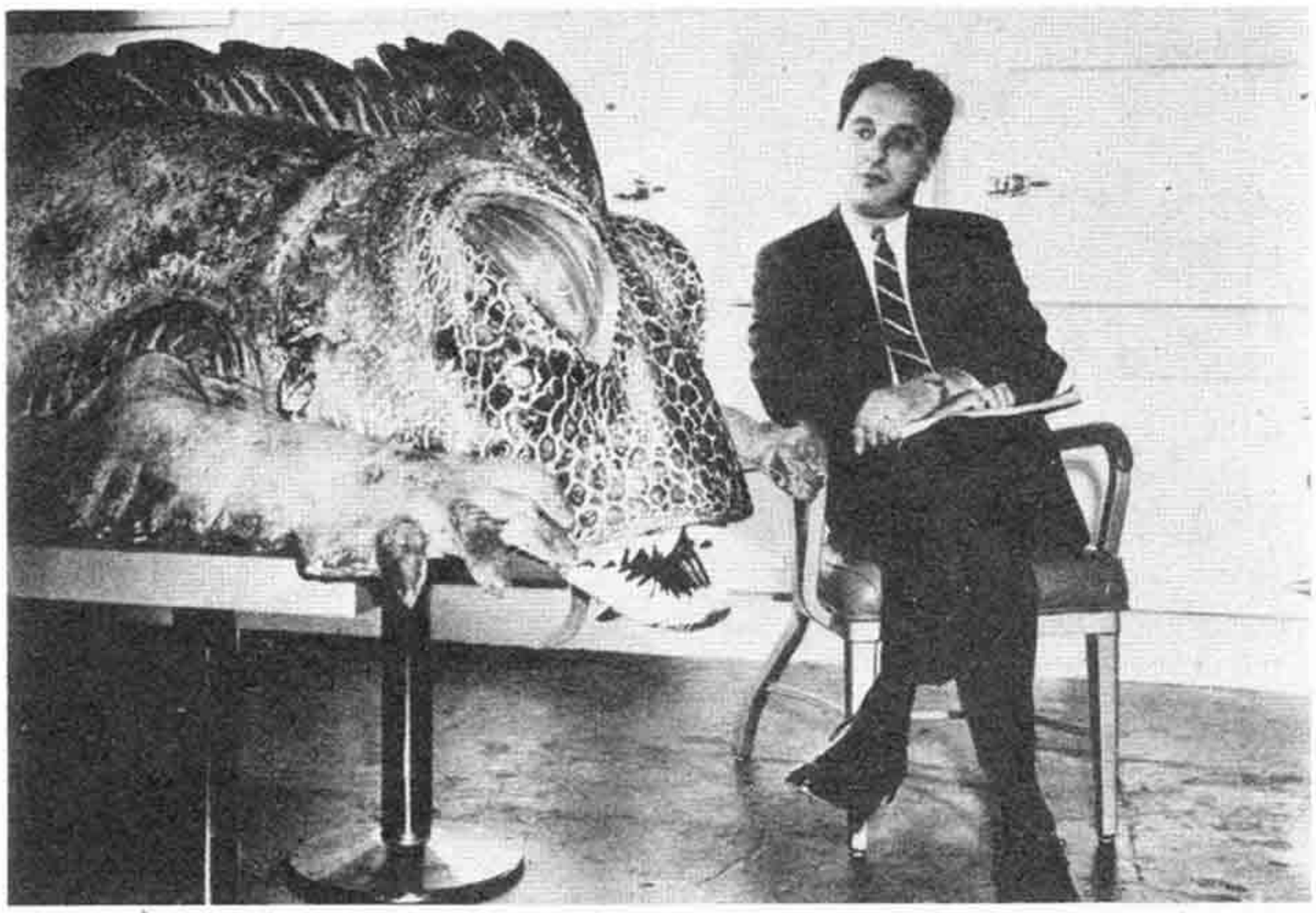
STEVENS: The were just people in Hollywood who were known to us from the underground. Some of them had worked in feature films, and others had only worked in commercials. They were the equivalent of the John Dykstra and Douglas Trumbull groups today. These people exist, and you know them if you're around.

FANG: One of the qualities that distinguishes *The Outer Limits* from all other series was its imaginative photography. The visual style was distinctive, and keyed to aesthetic values rather than expediency, a genuine rarity in commercial American television.

STEVENS: We used the "old masters" out of the cinematography group, whom we felt knew all this stuff but never got an opportunity to do it. A wonderful director of photography who came on for the second season was Kenneth Peach, a very gifted and capable guy who was from the old school. For our first season we were fortunate to have Conrad Hall, who has since gone on to win an Academy Award for photographing *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, but whom I moved up to cinematographer from being the camera operator on *Stony Burke*. We also had an art director named Jack Poplin, who was a genius at taking bits and pieces of things and put them together to make something new. As an anthology, we kept coming up with new things all the time on what was really a shoestring, compared to the budgets that exist today. *The Outer Limits* cost something like $135,000-$150,000 a show at top, and sometimes we had to come in at $80,000-$90,000.

FANG: Was that comparable to the budgets of other one-hour filmed series of the time?

STEVENS: It was comparable, but we were putting a lot more value on the screen than most other programs. Cowboy shows were legion in those days, and they had it easy, because they just went out to the Western sets and filmed the horses in the fields. We were coming up with outer space, other planets, the interiors of spaceships and the fields of the mind.



Joe Stefano on the set of "Tourist Attraction" with the show's "bear," the Icthyosaurus Mercurius, also known as the lizard-fish.

Next Issue: Why Battlestar Galactica?

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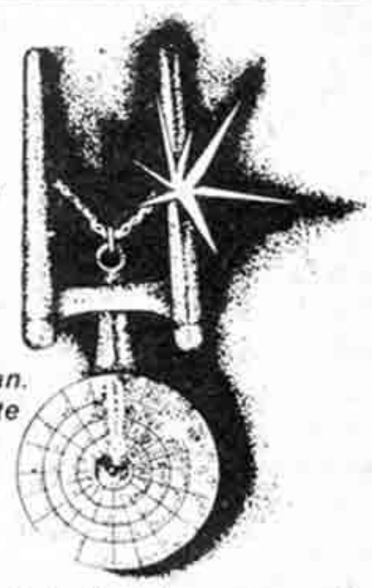

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Andre De Toth on the making of HOUSE OF WAX

By AL TAYLOR

Photos: © 1953 Warner Bros.

Editor's Note: Andre de Toth has been a film director since 1943. Though he has made many excellent action pictures, including The Indian Fighter, The Two-Headed Spy *and the "dirty dozen"-styled war picture* Play Dirty, *he will be best remembered by Fangorians everywhere as the director of* House of Wax, *de Toth's only horror effort and the first major Hollywood feature to be filmed in 3-D. Al Taylor conducted the following interview by letter in the early part of this year.*

Dear Mr. Taylor,

Sorry to be so late coming back to you, but we had to meet a deadline to deliver a screenplay.

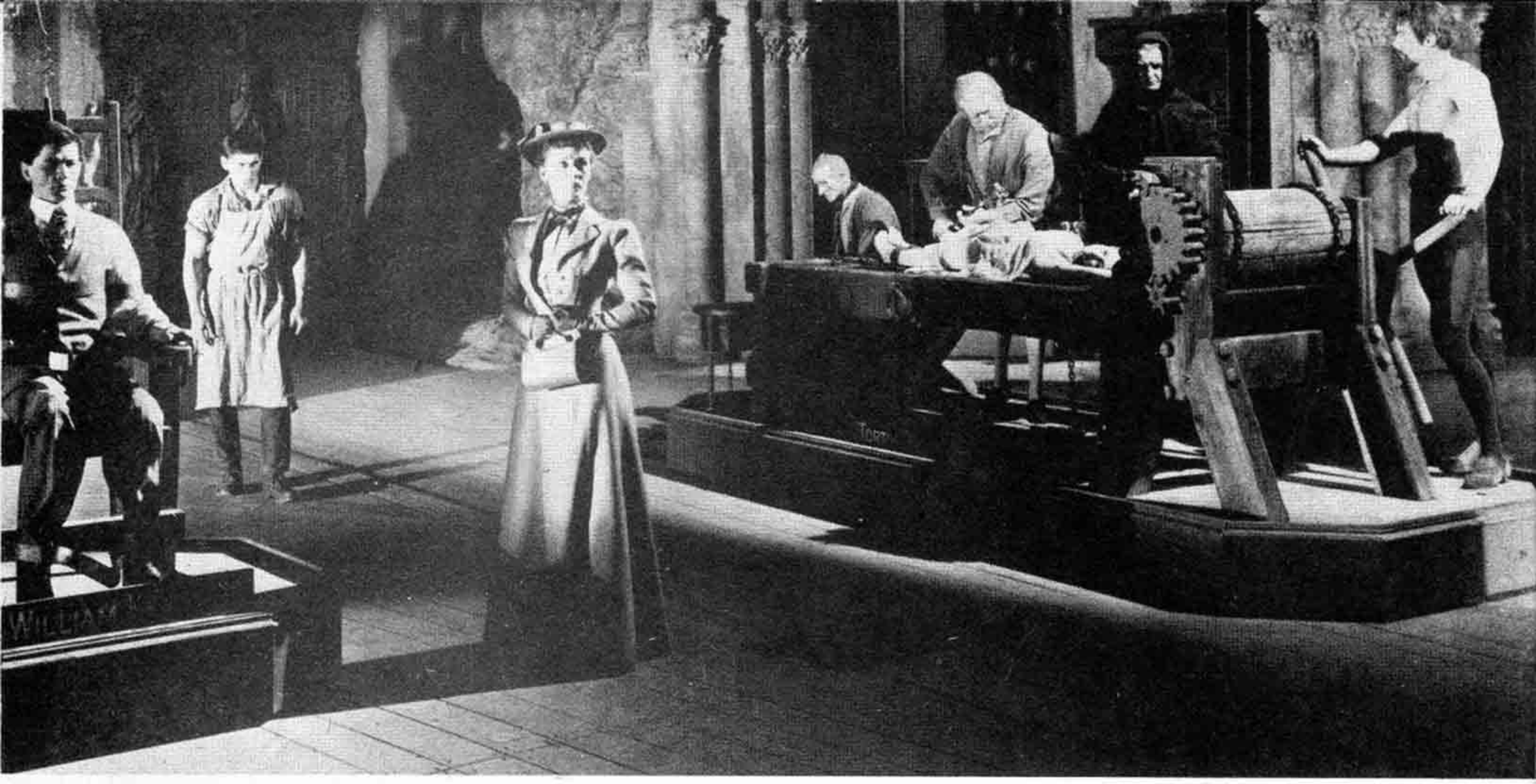
Your first point—full name, where born and when—

Sasvary Farkasvary Tothfalusy Toth Endre Antal Mihaly—but who in hell can go through life with a name like this? Luckily, all Hungarian documents were written in two languages, Hungarian (and even that only a few Hungarians could read) and French, then the "diplomatic" language. Because of this, the folderol of nobility was translated to the short French "de" and Endre became the French equivalent "Andre." Thus "Andre de Toth" was born May 15, 1913, in Mako, Hungary (of course).

Can you describe your early experiences before becoming a director? Why did you select directing as a profession?

I lost my physical virginity at the age of 14. Since I presume you are not writing a sex article, I shall refer only to my early artistic experiences. At 14 I had a one-"man" show as a painter and sculptor. My exhibits were laughed at. I am still on the fence in deciding whether I was that far ahead of the provincial and noble attendance, or if what I had put on the canvas and molded in clay was really that bad. Without pondering about it, I destroyed every piece I exhibited the very same night the exhibit opened.

My subsequent experience was equally glorious. At the age of 18 I wrote a one-act play which was put on with two other one-act plays. The other two plays ran for a month, mine was taken off after the first night. It was raining and I watched from a doorway across the street as they took my name down from the marquee. A man with silver-blue, marcel-wavy hair and shining monocle sidled up to me and asked me what I was watching. I ignored him. He asked me if I would like to have a coffee with him; I politely asked him to screw off. His answer was surprising: "Oh—you must be the author of the worst play I've seen. But it has the greatest promise." Then he introduced himself: He was Ferenc Molnar, the author of, among other things, *The Swan, Liliom, Carousel,* and he wasn't "that way" either. We had a cup of coffee and a friendship formed. And from there a



Charles Bronson stealthily creeps up on Phyllis Kirk as she cowers from the horrors of the wax museum.

line to Alex Korda. I have never looked back since. You can't win races looking back, not even a rat race, like our profession sometimes turns out to be.

How did you get the assignment to direct House of Wax?

By blackmail. I was assigned to direct *Springfield Rifle* with Gary Cooper, and we had a great deal of trouble with the screenplay which neither he nor I liked, and the studio didn't like what we wanted: Cooper to play an undercover agent, the first ever in Westerns. I wanted to quit and Cooper said then he would quit too. I promised Warner Brothers to stay provided I could do a remake of Michael Curtiz's *Mystery of the Wax Museum*, but in 3-D. They were annoyed and argued, but wanted Coop and Coop wanted me. So I got the assignment and they didn't notice I was blind in one eye. There was one man who noticed it, Charles Greenlaw, who is now vice president of world-wide production and he asked me—he and Coop had called me Tex—"Tex, can you do it?" I assured him I could. I wanted to do it. It was the greatest challenge I have faced. It needed discipline, a lot of homework.

What can you recall of the preproduction work on the burned face makeup for Vincent Price and the doctors brought in to assure makeup accuracy?

Reminds me of horror one would like to forget but cannot—the faces of burned people in the 1939 invasion of Poland. The plastic surgeons agreed with my ideas and I had several meetings with (Wally) Westmore and Gordon Bau, and they were tremendously helpful in creating an accurate makeup, the original images of which I would have liked to erase from my mind.

What was your budget and shooting schedule for House of Wax?

There was an executive dining room at Warners—a long table, 18 seats around it. This was the place where usually some of us, the chosen few, had the privilege of not only having alcoholic beverages before, during and after meals, but could discuss in quiet polite tones problems of budget, acting, schedules. On a particular day I was sitting next to Coop across the table from Charlie Greenlaw. Before I could finish my first Jack Daniels, J.L. (Warner), sitting at the head of the table of course, shouted at me:

'You son of a bitch, you blackmailed me into this ——ing *House of Wax*, I won't give you any more than one million, two hundred thousand, and you got to shoot the ——ing —— in 50 days—you got it?"

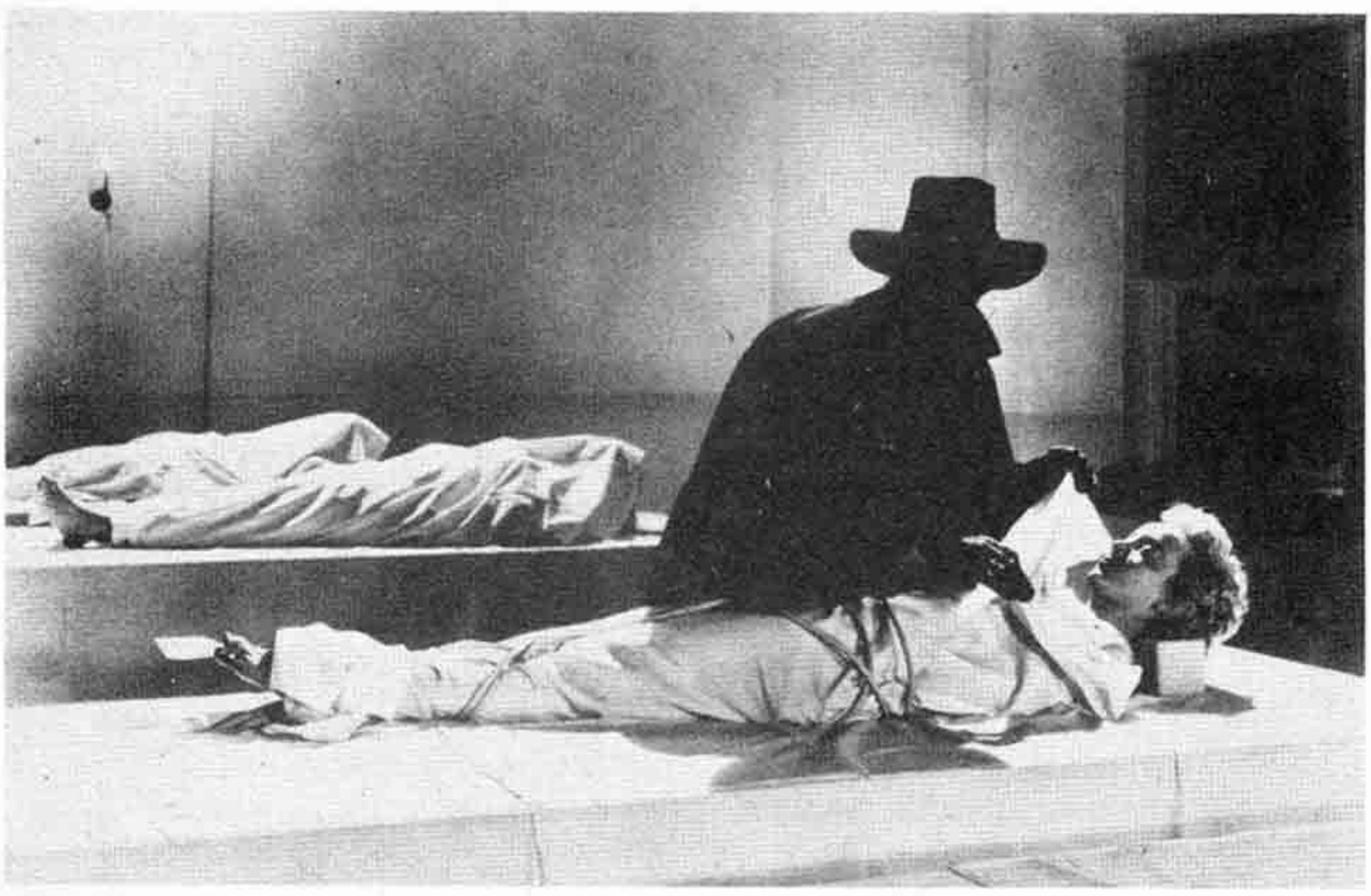
Coop smiled, Greenlaw squirmed. J.L. continued:

"You understand? Not one more ——ing minute."

I tried to interrupt, but J.L. very politely told me,

"Shut up, you blackmailing bastard. All right, one and a half million but no more than 60 days and that's it."

He slammed down his hand on the table. The silver jingled, my Jack Daniels half spilled. The discussion was finished. He wasn't interested any more. Greenlaw whispered across the table to me as Warner was thundering at someone else, "Can you do it, Tex?" I told him, "No, no I won't do it for a million and a half and 60 days." Greenlaw turned purple, excused himself and walked out of the room. After finishing lunch, he grabbed me as I walked toward my office. "How can you do this to me?



Carolyn Jones is about to be immortalized in wax by a cloaked madman.

Why didn't you let me know? You can't have any more; I backed you and now—" And I cut him off. I told him I didn't need more than maximum 30 days and not even a million.

Actually, I finished the picture for $658,000 and shot it in 28 days.

The 28th day happened to be a Wednesday. I was late coming into the executive dining room and as I sat down, J.L. told the waiter to give Mr. de Toth a double Jack Daniels, then turned to me and informed me that he had seen some of the stuff and he would like to go through the whole picture wth me Thursday. I told him it was impossible because I was leaving Thursday morning for Palm Springs for a long weekend. He jumped to his feet. Mussolini and Hitler in their heydays never struck more ferocious poses, made more pugnacious gestures as he screamed that I blackmailed him into this production, I could not quit because I'd never work again, ever, anywhere, he'd put me on the blacklist. He told the waiter to stop delivering my drink.

Greenlaw dropped his spoon into his soup. Coop went into a coughing spell. Both of them knew I had finished shooting.

J.L. stormed out of the dining room, Greenlaw followed. By the time I got back to my office, there was a case of Jack Daniels from Jack Warner with a note: "You one-eyed son of a bitch, go get totally blind drunk and have a good weekend." I only wish there would be more J.L. Warners or Harry Cohns or David Selznicks in this business. I have to buy my own Jack Daniels now.

Did you meet with any particular frustrations or challenges in the course of filming?

I am a very generous person. I have no frustrations, I give them. I have no problems, I give them. And I have no ulcers, I give them. And every scene is a challenge. I face the facts. You can't lull yourself into illusions and you have to be a professional and know that sometimes you have to handle ——, so don't handle it like gold.

How would you describe your style of directing?

I am a thief, stealing from life, trying to put it on the screen. Since I have one eye I have to look twice at things so maybe I see more than a person with two looking once. There's a big difference between looking and seeing.

Do you recall any amusing incidents that occurred in the course of filming?

The whole undertaking was a wonderful joke, amusing and we all loved it, the actors, actresses, technicians. Except Miss Phyllis Kirk. She hated the whole thing for awhile. She was as flat-chested as a marble table-top when I interviewed her. Then on the first day of shooting she appeared with some Mae West-ish bulges. I asked her to shed the kapok. Indignantly she persisted it was all real. I asked Wardrobe to give me a stick pin. They complied and during subsequent rehearsal I stuck the pin in the bulge. She never noticed it. Then before her first take I asked Wardrobet to pull out

Phyllis Kirk and Frank Lovejoy encounter Vincent Price, the wizard of wax.

the pin from Miss Kirk's breast. I explained to her and the cast and crew, she had talent, and no kapok was needed to augment it. By the time the first day was over, we were friends and still are. You have to ask Vincent Price, who has a great memory for anecdotes, and I am sure he will fill you in with some more.

Did the original story treatment for House of Wax *differ from the finished film?*

Without hurting anybody's feelings, we all tried and there was a great difference between the shooting script and the actual film you have seen.

Do you feel that some of the 3-D effects were a little corny or staged, such as the man with the ball and paddle who warns the third row to watch out for their bag of popcorn?

I resent your phrasing "Do you feel some of the 3-D effects were a little corny or staged?" I resent "a little corny." The man with the ball and paddle was *very* corny, at the request of the producer, Byrnie Foy, one o the famous seven Foys of the vaudeville era, and I was in thorough agreement with him. But this is the only scene where I consciously went for a 3-D effect.

What are your recollections of Vincent Price? Did he fall into character easily?

Vincent Price is a very talented actor and a gentleman, not necessarily in order of importance. Nothing falls in place easily with him. Our meticulous search for reality, credibility and understanding of the character is probably the reason that in something that could have been a phoney hoax, the cardboard character of *Mystery of the Wax Museum* came to real life, and the makeup was not only scars attached to his face, but something that scarred his inside, which made him into the character he played, and which I was finally able to put on the screen.

You directed one of the first 3-D films; but, having only one eye, how did you know whether you were achieving the desired 3-D effects?

One of the reasons that 3-D is the cinema's slowest revolution—a polite phrase meaning "failure"—was the directors' and the filmmakers' self-indulgent conceit of judging effects according to their own eyes. Having only one eye I could not indulge in a like manner—I had to be sure, I had to know. Know, based on knowledge of optics.

There aren't two human beings whose eyes are identical. The human eye lens varies from 50mm to 55mm; peripheral vision varies from 25 percent to 38 percent. The interaxial distance (distance between the two lines of sight) of 2½ inches as a generally accepted measure is too imprecise. However small the variation may be, because the eye muscles work more than any other part of the body, including the heart, the most infinitesimal variation can greatly tax the system and cause fatigue. What may look sensational for five minutes on the dailies is going to tear the audiences' eyes out during the 90-minute muscle exercise of viewing the picture.

With the combined forces of convergence (the combination of two picture elements) and interaxial distance, the optimum result is not the momentary sensational effect. 3-D should not be a freak show. Wisely used, it can add to the reality of the story, the scene, the ambience—can put the audience in the situation, not only viewing it. Through research, and after consulting eye specialists like Dr. Robert Hare and Julian Gunsberg and various other optical engineers, I planned every set-up to be the least taxing, the most comfortable for the eyes and, except for the "little corny" effect of the man with the paddle and ball, I have never overstepped the limit of comfort margin.

The Motion Picture Research Council's 3-D calculator was in development, and we have contributed in its coming to life, but in spite of its existence in the later 50s, people did not take into consideration the convergence and interaxial spacing factors. The difference between a child's

(continued on page 57)

B Is for Blaisdell

Part two of an interview with the foremost monster maker of the 1950s B-movie boom.

By RANDY PALMER

During the winter months of 1956, American International Pictures (AIP) filmed a *real* quickie called *Voodoo Woman*, which was releaed in 1957. And once again, Paul Blaisdell's talents were contracted. But this time the budget was so tight the producer couldn't even afford a new monster—so it was left up to Blaisdell to simply "revamp" the She-Creature costume for the picture.

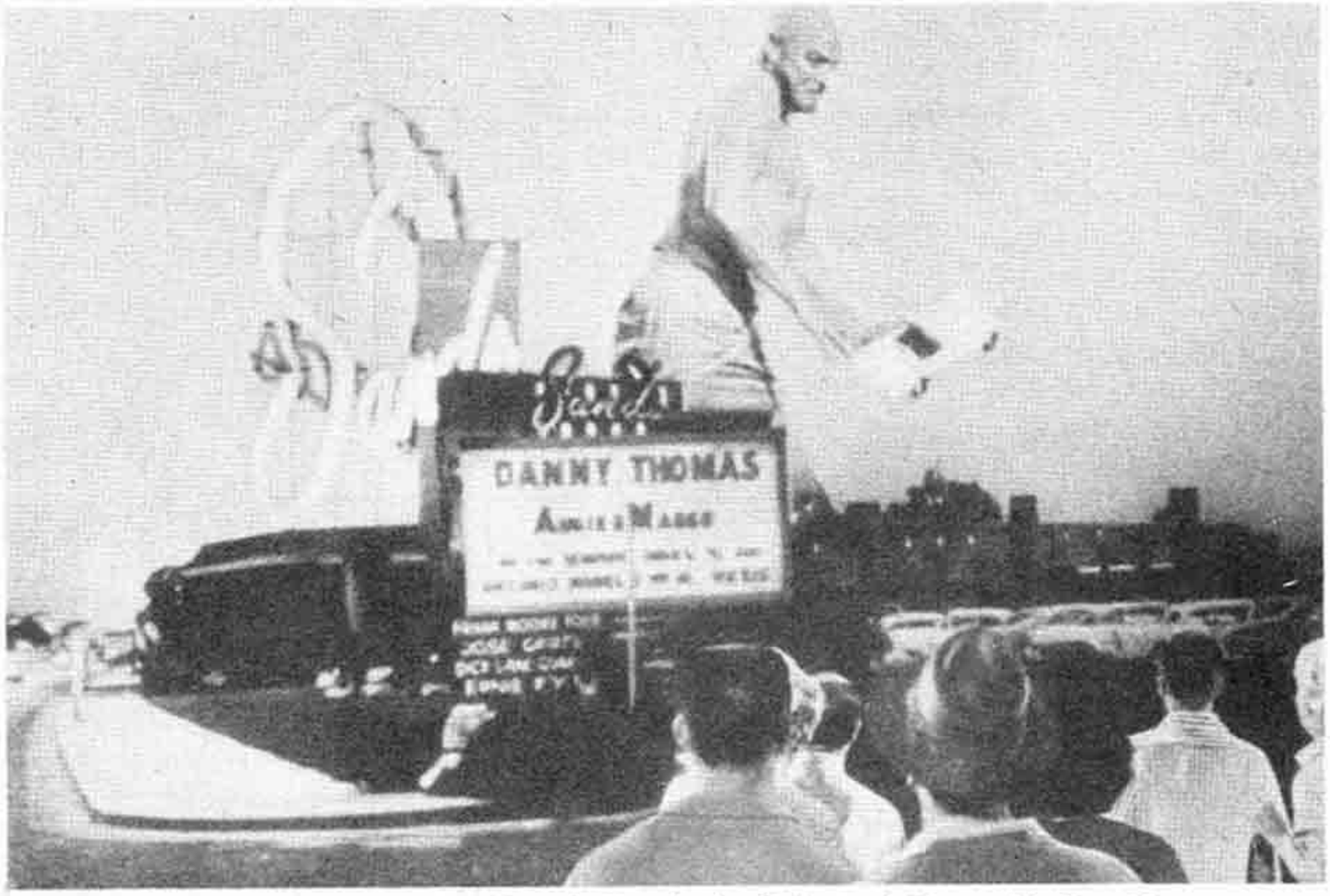
"In actual fact," reveals Blaisdell, "I did a production illustration showing what a 'zombie-woman' coming out of the grave

Perhaps his most famous creation, *IT!* was not played by Blaisdell, but by Ray "Crash" Corrigan.

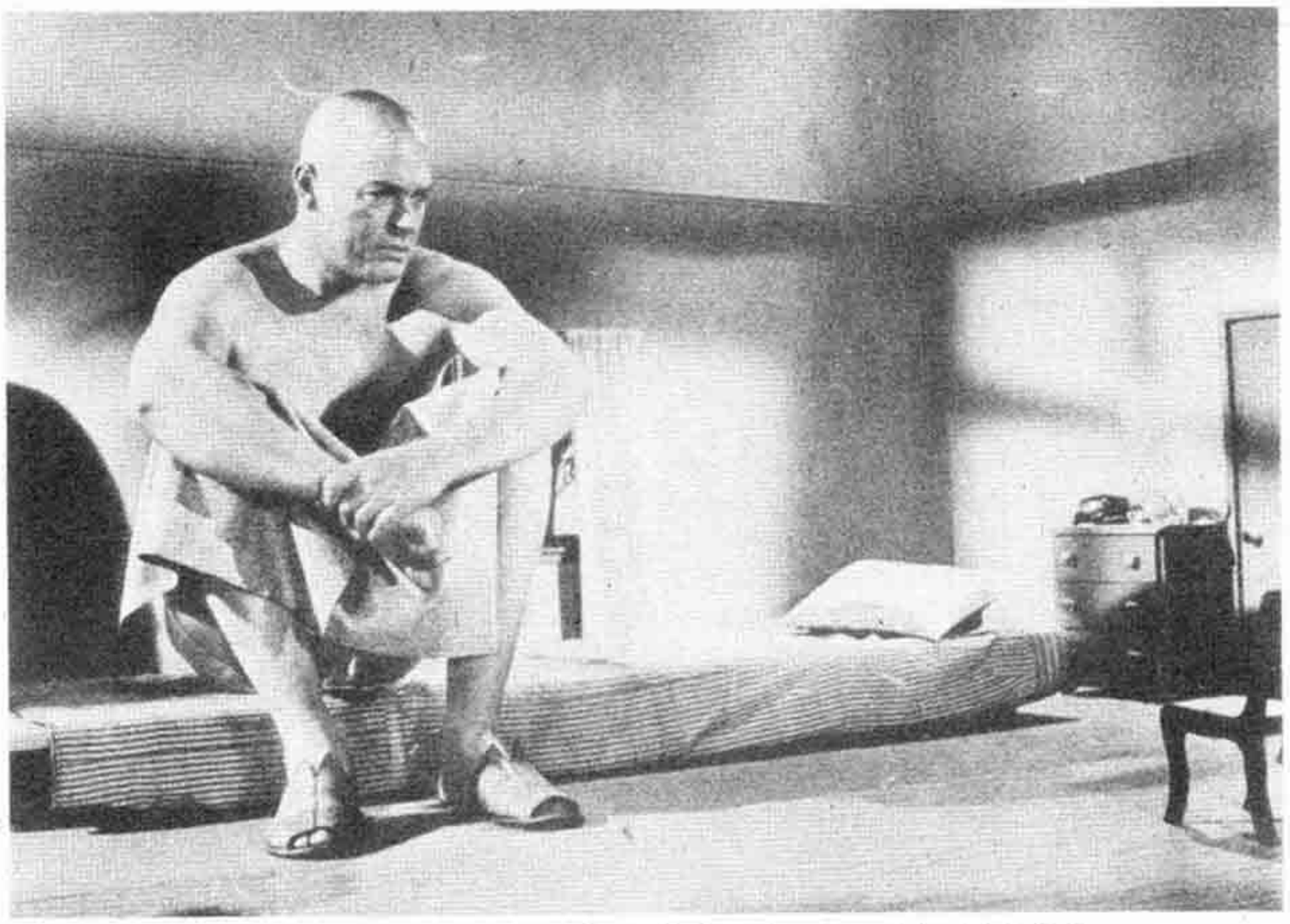
should really look like—she'd give you the dry heaves if she served you a cup of tea! And believe me, she did not have the vitamins that the She-Creature looked like she was taking, even slightly revamped or trimmed down. But they were determined to produce *Voodoo Woman* in record time so, consequently, we agreed I would strip down the She-Creature to make the zombie body. Harry Thomas would make the head, and I would be inside the suit.

"*Voodoo Woman* was a helluva picture to work on," Blaisdell continues. "I suffered an acid burn on my left leg, the remnants of which are still there to this day! What happened was, as you may recall if you saw the movie, Tom Conway poured acid on me [as the zombie] and it went up in a cloud of smoke on my leg, just to prove I was 'acid-proof,' which was in accordance with the script. I asked the special-effects man if it was a kind of chemical-smoke we used to make in chemistry class in high school (using hydrochloric acid and ammonia). This'll give out a beautiful cloud of smoke—as long as you don't pour it on living tissue! He assured me it was a new type of chemical called 'Brett Smoke' that caused no harm whatsoever. The only mistake Tom and I made was taking his word for it!

"Well, the smoke poured out of my leg beautifully when Tom poured it on me, and I was completely invunerable; but inside the suit I was feeling the warmth collecting on my leg, which is significant of an acid burn. When that particular scene was over and Eddie Cahn [the director] yelled 'Cut!', *I* started yelling for help! It was a real hard-luck picture!"



With a little help from Blaisdell, Bert I. Gordon's *Colossal Man* raids Las Vegas.



Cramped quarters for the *Amazing Colossal Man*, furnished by Blaisdell.

Autobiography?

After a brief stint involving a cat-mask for AIP's *Cat Girl* (1957), Blaisdell went to work on the company's *How to Make a Monster* (1958), a nearly autobiographical picture about a Hollywood monster make-up man who goes berserk when the company he works for—AIP—halts production on all future monster mellers, thereby putting the monstrous makeup specialist, played by Robert H. Harris, out of work. "I'm glad you reminded me that his name was Robert H. Harris," Blaisdell says, "because to me he was always 'Pete'!"

No, I told him, that was the character's name in the script. Blaisdell laughs. "Well, no wonder I was calling him Pete!"

For that picture, Blaisdell created a number of prop masks which were burned at the fiery conclusion. Then he went to work on another 1958 AIP shocker—*The Spider*.

"I did some makeup for the tarantula in that picture that was designed to be put on the boney plate that the tarantula has in back of his eight compound eyes, and I had it rigged so it looked like the tarantula had just two eyes. But when he started crawling toward you. . . . It looked like he'd come from the Gates of Hell! The producer took one look at it and said, 'Nope, we can't use it, it's too horrible'!" (Blaisdell did design a rotted corpse for *The Spider* and also a giant spider leg which was used in one scene.)

For *The Amazing Colossal Man*, one of AIP's colossal successes, Blaisdell had to create a number of miniatures. Did he find this more difficult to do than working on full-scale monster suits?

"Man, I've been keeping the company that makes Excedrin in business for years!" quips Blaisdell. "Yeah, it is more difficult. It's a case of making props that are six times larger than life-size and six times smaller. But how do you make things six times normal size and six times miniature size? Well, you could get a slide rule and go crazy! We had the same problems on *Attack of the Puppet People* [AIP 1958], which was a nightmare in itself! But yeah, it is much more difficult."

Alcoholic Martians

One of the more famous 50s films Paul Blaisdell worked on was *Invasion of the Saucermen* (1957), an AIP film about Martians who use alcohol as a lethal weapon, told tongue-in-cheek. The funny thing was, *Invasion of the Saucermen* started out as a straight shocker—it was *after* production had begun that the decision was made to turn it into a comedy.

"Everybody was watching the rushes day by day," Blaisdell reminisces. "The thing was just so *ludicrous*, it was a natural to change it into a spoof! To put this out into a movie—it sort of just collapsed into a comedy, and when everybody picked up on it, including our little Saucermen buddies, it really turned into a very entertaining picture. And it made money from the

first day it hit the box office."

Like his She-Creature, Blaisdell's Saucermen were capable of doing a lot more than they were ever allowed to do on-camera. "The eyeballs could look around on the Martian hand and signal the hand that everything was okay by nodding it up and down, and just tell the hand to go on about its business. If somebody sneezed, for example, the eye on the Martian hand would whip right around and look at him! But this was never used in the film: 'No time, no money, no film.' Blah-blah-blah!"

Blaisdell admitted to playing one of the Martian Saucerman himself: "Frankly, I don't know which was the bigger dummy—me or the guy that played the bull! Because I was the Martian that fought the bull. Sometimes I wonder if I didn't have better days fighting the 'bull' in the producer's office!"

"Straight" Roles

One of the final AIP monster movies was *The Ghost of Dragstrip Hollow* (1959)—another "spoof" that re-used the She-Creature once again. Blaisdell also appeared in some "straight" roles for AIP during the 50s.

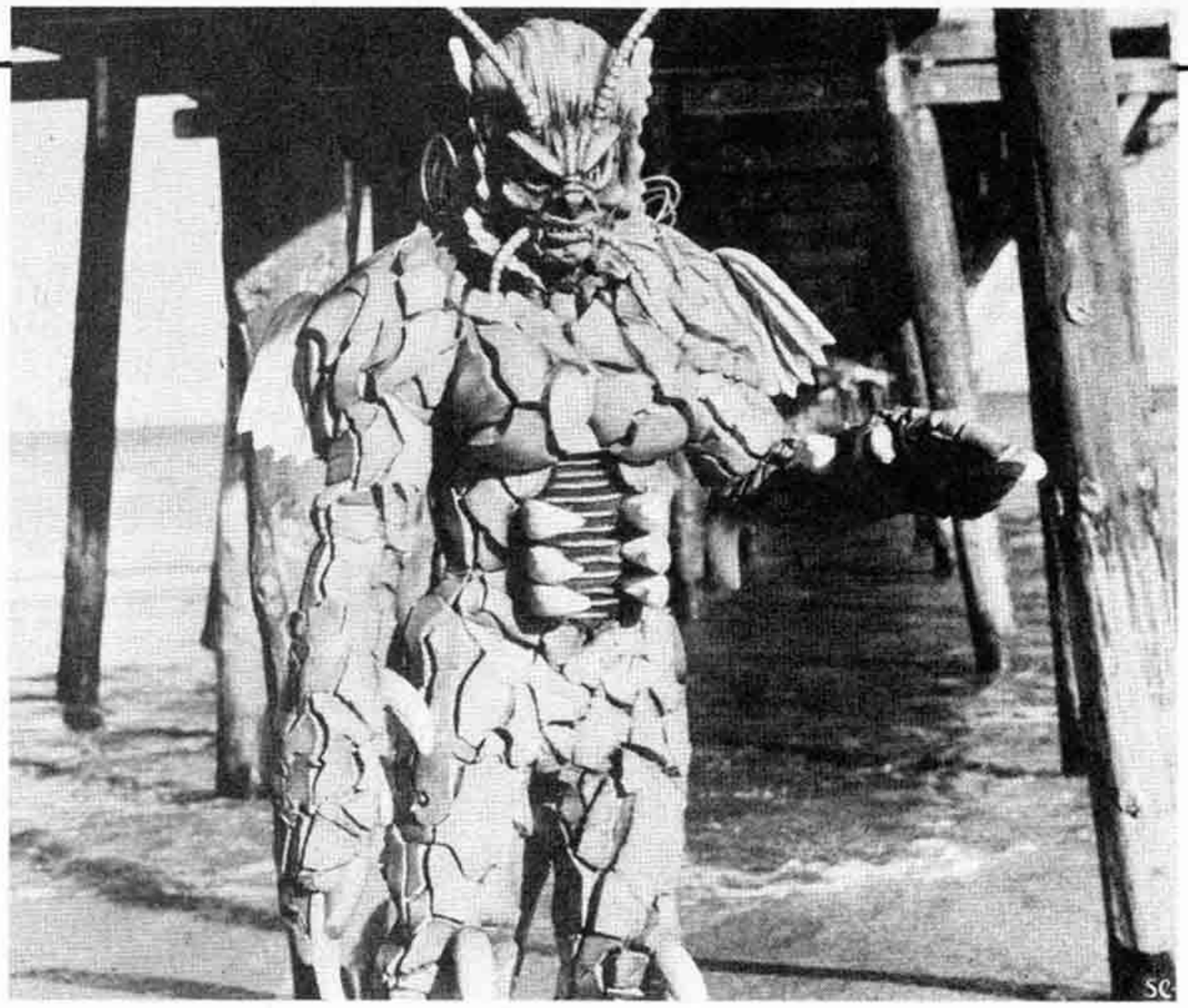
"I was a corpse in *The Undead*," he reveals. "Frankly, I thought I was a pretty good corpse! I mean, how many times do you get a chance to be a corpse and have very attractive girls using you for a mattress? But it's *not* pleasant being a corpse when you have insulation from the ceiling floating down into your eyes when you're supposed to be a staring-eyed corpse!

"I've also been belted over the head with a chain in *Motorcycle Gang*, I was one of Peggy Castle's 'heavies' in *Oklahoma Woman* and besides playing the monster, I also had bit parts in *Voodoo Woman* and *It Conquered the World*. I didn't get to bite anybody, though.

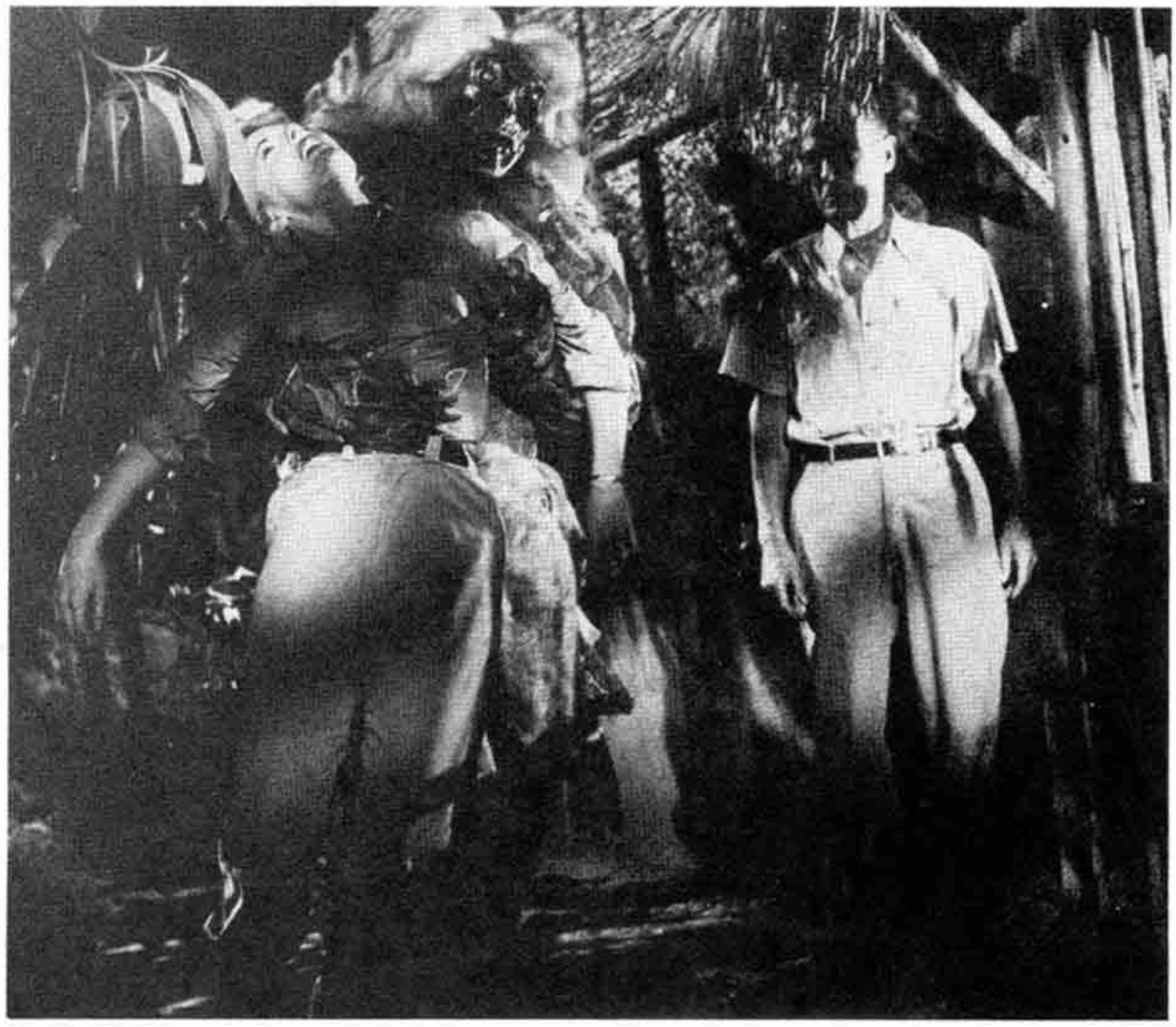
"Then there was *Hot Rod Girl*. I was a 'near-miss' in that movie. The producer wanted it to look like the Hot Rod Girl was driving really fast, and he told me, 'She's really going 30 mph; Paul, you act real slow and fall over in slow motion, see. That'll make it look like she's going 100 mph.' I said, 'Yeah, whatever.' "

Blaisdell also did work for studios other than AIP. For *Monster from Green Hell* (1957), a DCA release about giant wasps on the loose in Africa, he did some production illustrations, although he did not design the wasps themselves. For Roger Corman's *Not of This Earth* (AA 1958), he built the flying "umbrella creature" and assorted gadgets. He designed (but did not build) the "starring monster" in *From Hell It Came*—an eight-foot walking tree. He also did a number of production illustrations for *Jack the Giant Killer* (1962) and *Goliath and the Dragon* (1961), an Italian motion picture.

One of Blaisdell's most popular creations was *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* (UA 1958), a film that seems to have been the forerunner of 1979's *ALIEN* (which Blaisdell has not seen). Although he designed and built *It!*, he did not play the monster—that chore fell on the shoulders of Ray 'Crash' Corrigan. Originally *It!* was supposed to have a pair of bulging Martian eyes to go with the rest of its bulky body. "Ed Small, who was the top dog in the production department," explains Blaisdell, "wanted Ray to use his natural eyes. He didn't want to use the plastic eyes which I had designed. I made up some colored latex for Ray to put around his eyes to have them blend in with the headpiece. I think Ray's eyes were a little too small for the scale of the monster, but he carried it off very well. It's not easy to do a part like that with so much latex plastered over your orbs!"



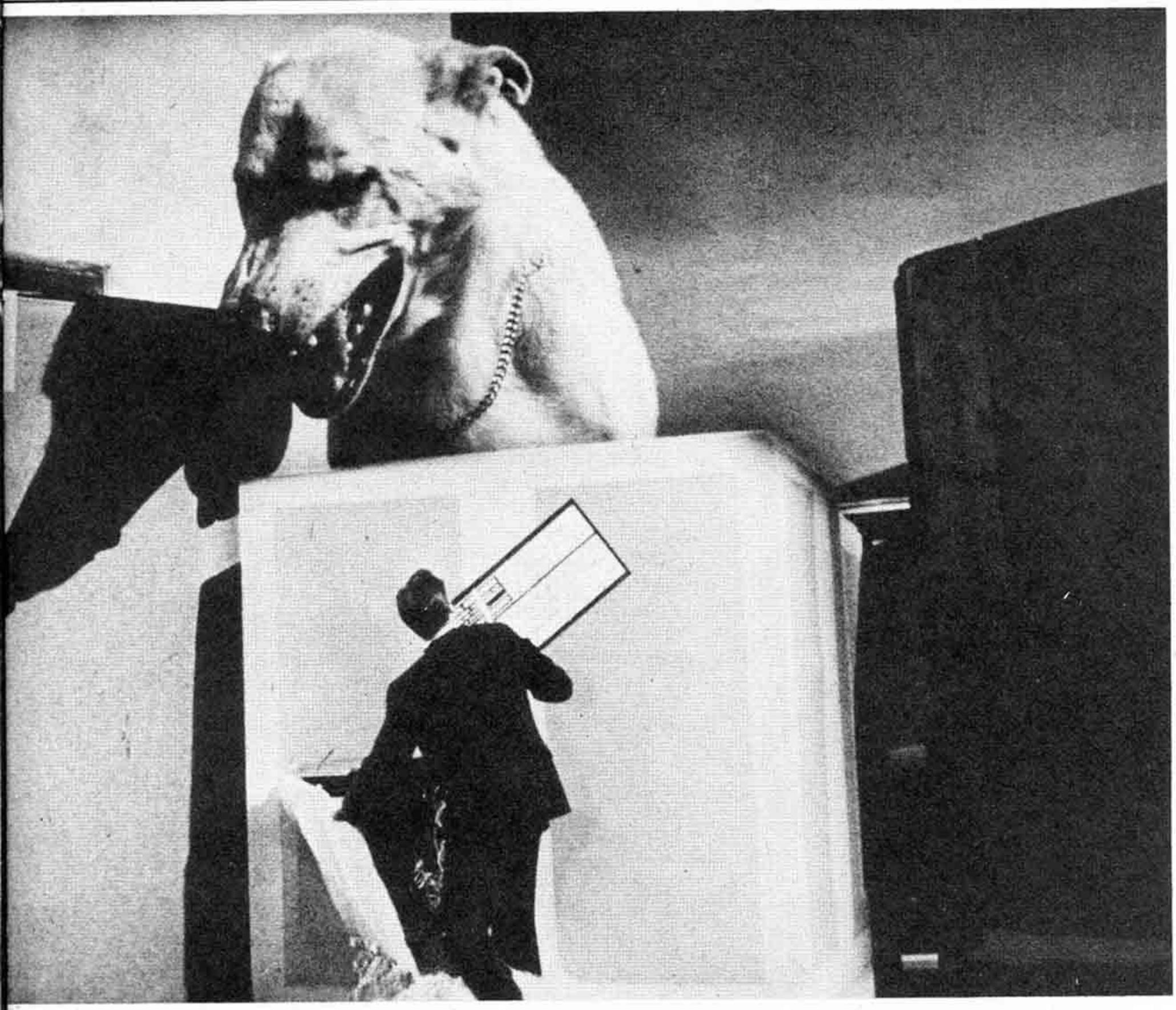
Blaisdell's *The She Creature*, designed for our favorite monster mogul, Alex Gordon.



Voodoo Woman, Gordon's follow-up, featured Blaisdell in a refurbished she-creature costume.

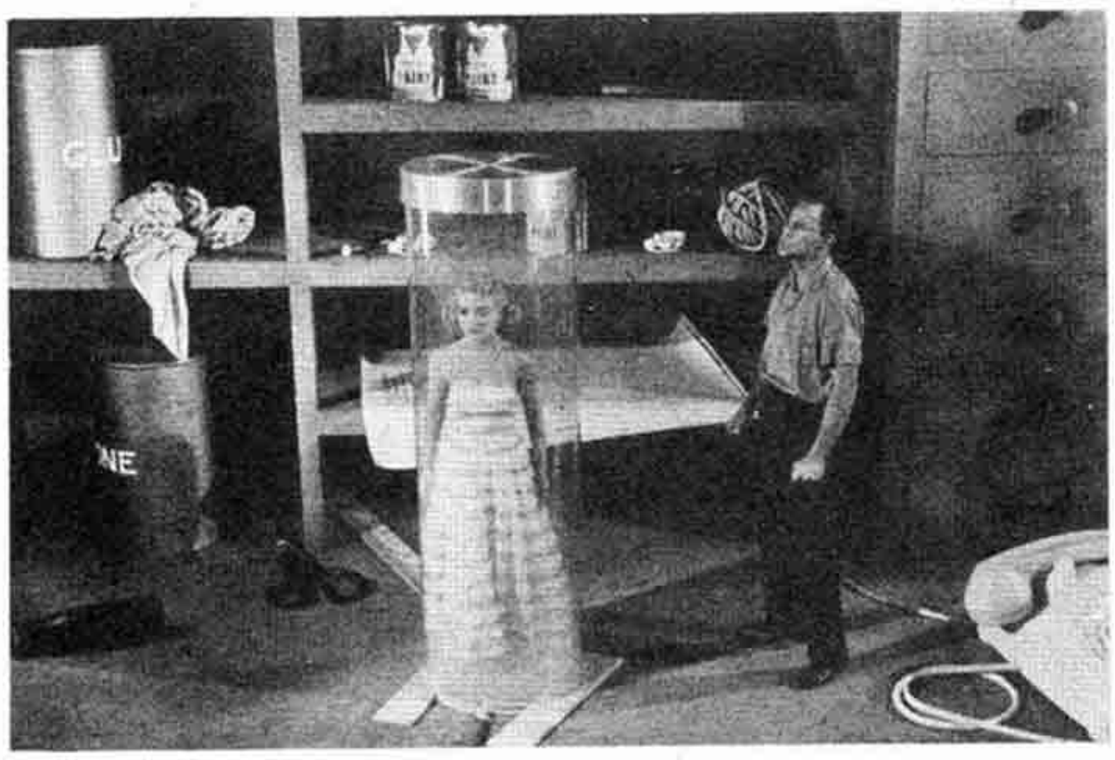
Monster Movie Demise

With the dawn of the 1960s, less and less



On *Attack of the Puppet People,* Blaisdell again set to work, building teensy-weensy sets and props.

"Dear Fango: Did you ever think of putting out a *very tiny* edition? . . ."



"Last night it was a headache; the night before you were too tired . . . and *now* . . ."

of the type of movies Blaisdell had been involved in at AIP and other film companies were being made. Why did he think the "budget monster movie," so prevalent in the 1950s, disappeared in the 60s?

"They didn't really disappear; they just changed in demeanor. You went from something like *Day the World Ended* to something like *The Ghost of Dragstrip Hollow*. It became a comedy, a semi-musical; it started featuring young people more and more, and finally you went to movies like *Beach Party* and stuff like that. The interest in that type of movie was changing due to the fact that young people didn't want the monster movies anymore—they wanted some type of movies that they were more oriented to: beaching, surfing, stuff like that. The whole style changed. And styles do change. So little by little the monster movie was phased out. Although it's still fun to watch 'em on The Late Show!"

One final question: If Paul Blaisdell had it to do all over gain (or if he *had* to do it all over again!), would he change anything?

Blaisdell's head bobs emphatically. "Yeah, the first thing I'd change is my paycheck. And the second thing I'd change is my expense account."

Well, what can you expect from someone who used to work on *budget* monster movies?

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#2—Don Coscarelli on *Phantasm*; *Humanoid*, *Dracula* and *Nosferatu* previews; Richard Matheson interview Pt. 1; Making Pal's *War of the Worlds*; Robert Florey's lost Lugosi *Frankenstein*; Rouben Mamoulian on *Jeckyll an Hyde*; *Prophecy* FX; Carl Lundgren FantasticArt; *Dr. Who* villains and *Who* poster.

#3—David Cronenberg on *The Brood*; Stephen King on Kubrick and *The Shining*; Matheson Pt. 2; *Kolchak the Night Stalker* article and episode guide; Jack (*It Came from Outer Space*, *The Creature*) Arnold remembers; *Arabian Adventure*; *Tales of the Unexpected* previews; Mike Sullivan FantasticArt; *ALIEN* poster art by Barclay Shaw.

#4—Aliens of *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*; Robots of *The Black Hole*; Film femme Caroline Munro; Herschell Lewis "The Wizard of Gore," *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *King Kong* and *Curst of the Demon* behind the scenes; On the set of *'Salem's Lot*; Miachel Hague FantasticArt; Warrior Robots from *Astro Boy* to *Voltus V* plus Robot poster.

#5—Carpenter and Hill on *The Fog*; *Saturn 3*'s SF horror; Bert Godron's *The Coming*; *Jason of Star Command*'s monsters; *Galactica*'s Cylon Secrets; Behind the Scenes of *THEM!*, *Son of Kong* and *Village of the Damned*; Dennis Anderson FantasticArt; Pull-Out Bonus—21" x 32" Faeries Posterbook.

#6—*Friday the 13th!*; The shock FX of Tom Savini and Rob Bottin; Peter Medak, director of *The Changeling*; Stephen King meets George Romero!; Vincent Price on the Corman Years, Pt.1; *Planet of The Apes*; *Quatermass*; Doug Beekman FantasticArt; *Count Fangor* premiere; Hammer Films history & poster.

#7—*The Shining* preview; Director William Lustig, stars Joe Spinell and Caroline Munro and FX man Tom Savini on *Maniac!*; Inside Bob Short's effects factory and *The Terror Factor*; Chris Walas' alien creations for *Galaxina*; Disney's *Watcher in the Woods* previewed; Vincent Price, Pt. 2; The Hitchcock Legacy, Pt. 1; Hammer's *Captain Kronos* and *Curse of Frankenstein*; and Chuck Jones: The Great American Animator.

#8—We go too far with gut-wrenching pix from *ZOMBIE*; John Carpenter Interviewed; Gary Kurtz on *The Empire Strikes Back*; Jim Danforth & David Allen, *The Hearse*; The Monster Maker—Paul Blaisdell, Pt. 1; Scatman Crothers on *The Shining*; Hammer's *Horror of Dracula*, *Force Five* animated preview, and George Pal: Sci-Fi's Best Friend.

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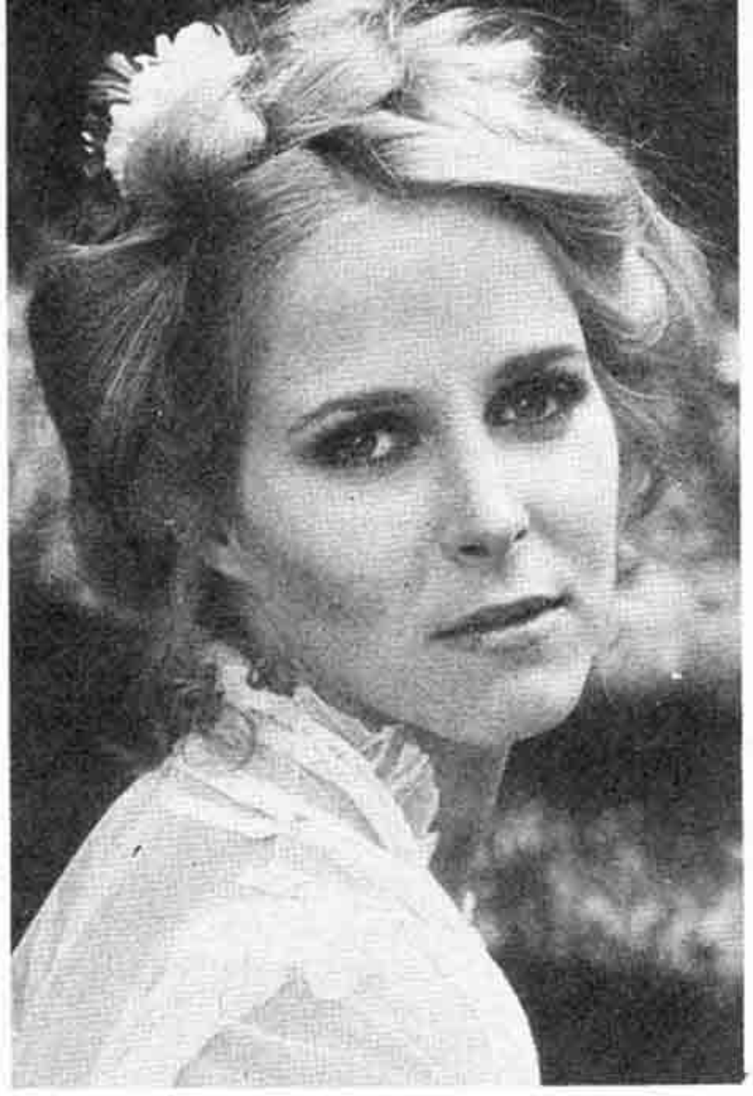
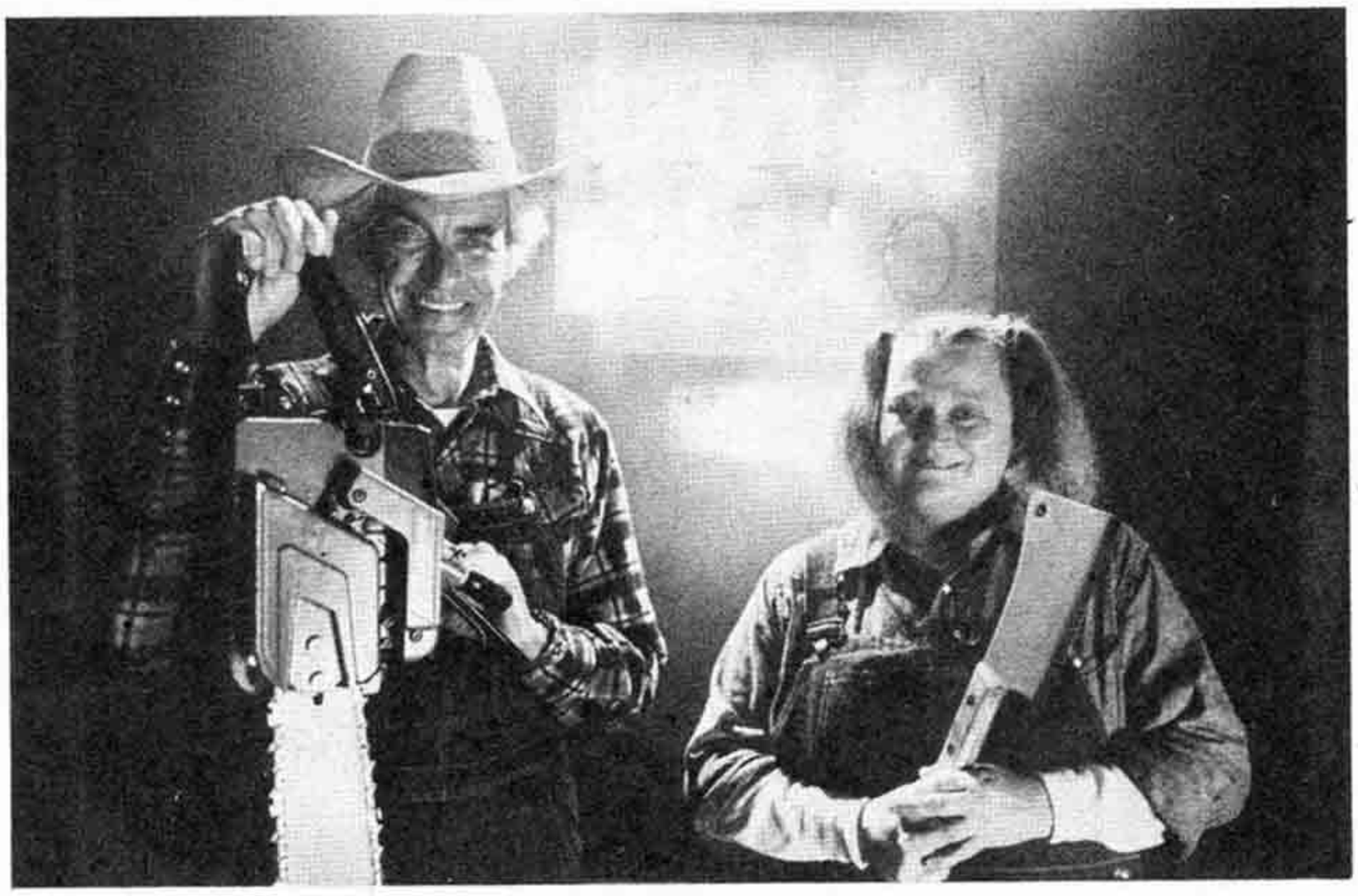


Nina Axelrod plays Beauty to Rory Calhoun's Beastly Farmer Vincent.



Vincent and Ida display the tools of their trade.

Motel Hell

(continued from page 8)

is not exactly a "struggling newcomer" in the film world. He recently co-produced the romantic musical *Those Lips, Those Eyes* starring Frank Langella, and, before that, was associate producer for John Milius' *The Wind and the Lion* and *Time After Time*, an excellent SF fantasy that never reached its proper audience because of shoddy distribution and promotion.

While the young producer-writer agrees that *Time After Time* deserved a larger audience, he's more hesitant than we are to lay the blame at the doorstep of its distributor. "The hardest part of making a movie is selling it. There are no Francis Ford Coppolas in that end of the business; after you've spent six months to a year or more making a picture, when you're through with it you show it to a whole new group of people, whose reactions, nine times out of 10, is: 'Jesus, how are we going to sell this?' In the South, they thought *Time After Time* was a British picture because it had two English actors in it (Malcolm McDowell and Christopher Plummer). I'm told that's the kiss of death down there. And the ad campaign gave the impression that it was simply H.G. Wells chasing Jack the Ripper, not necessarily something that people are going to go to the theater to see, and certainly not the feeling that the movie generates."

Robert Jaffe has less film experience than his brother, but comes across as the one with a greater affinity for the field of horror. He talked to us a bit of his involvement in *Demon Seed*. "I wrote the original script, it was sold to MGM and subsequently was re-written by several people, I even re-wrote myself at one point. It was not, overall, a happy experience.

"It was originally conceived as a romantic horror-fantasy-comedy, something in the spirit of *Motel Hell*. I saw it as a *Beauty and the Beast* story, almost a fairy tale. Unfortunately, the people involved wanted to make it more realistic. I don't think they realized that filmgoers want to see something very much out of the ordinary, something closer to what you find in good science fiction, with a bit of romance and adventure."

Punk-rockers Ivan and the Terribles are inducted into Farmer Vincent's service.

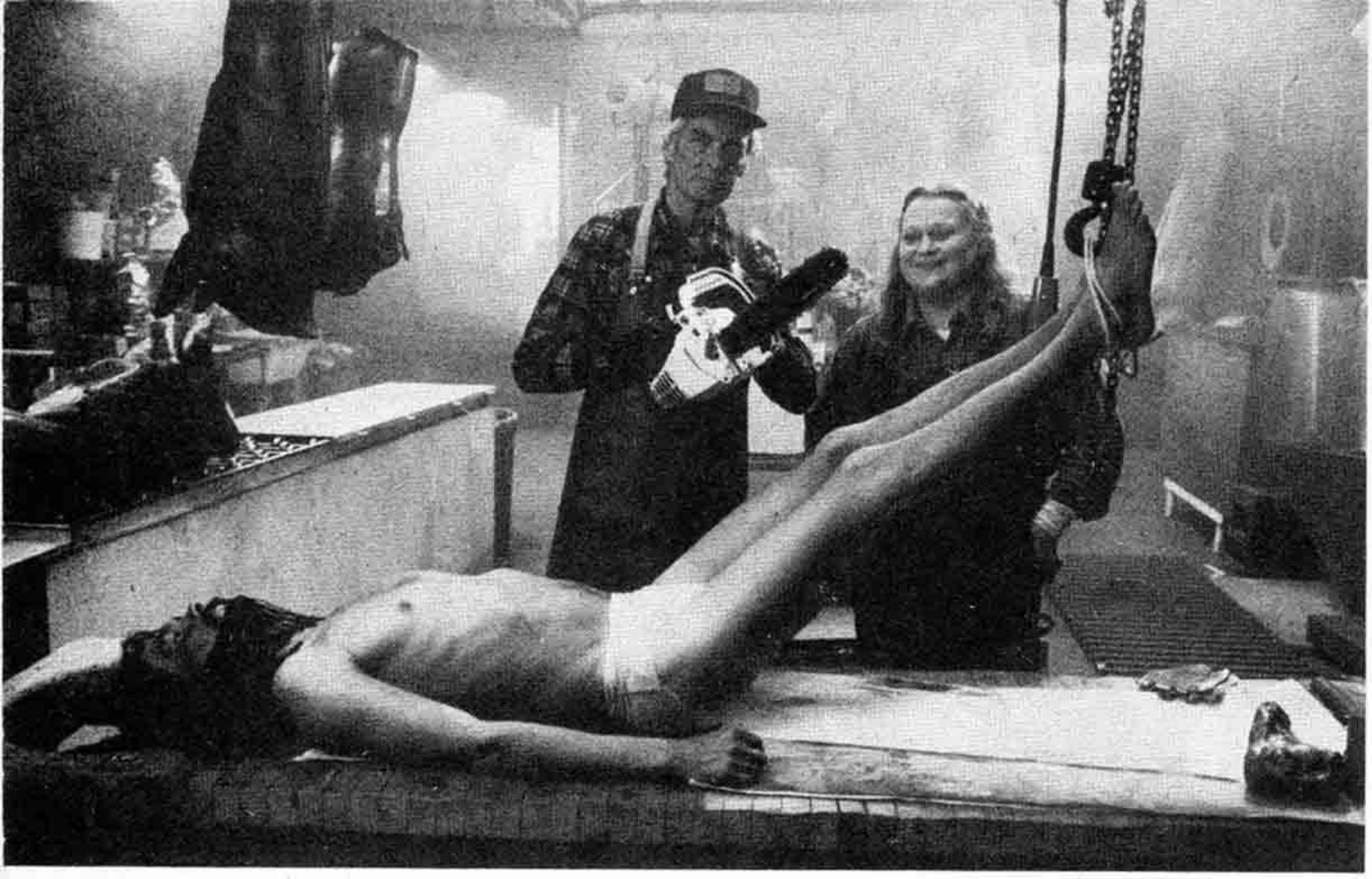
Funny Axe-ploitation

To Robert Jaffe, *Motel Hell* is a second chance to see the *Beauty and the Beast* theme translated into horror film terms; crucial to the plot is the romance between Terry and the secretly sinister Farmer Vincent, who is wonderfully portrayed in a change-of-pace role by Western star Rory Calhoun, best known for his television series *The Texan*. Calhoun is particularly adept at balancing the folksy friendliness of Farmer Vincent with the dark humor implicit in much of his dialogue.

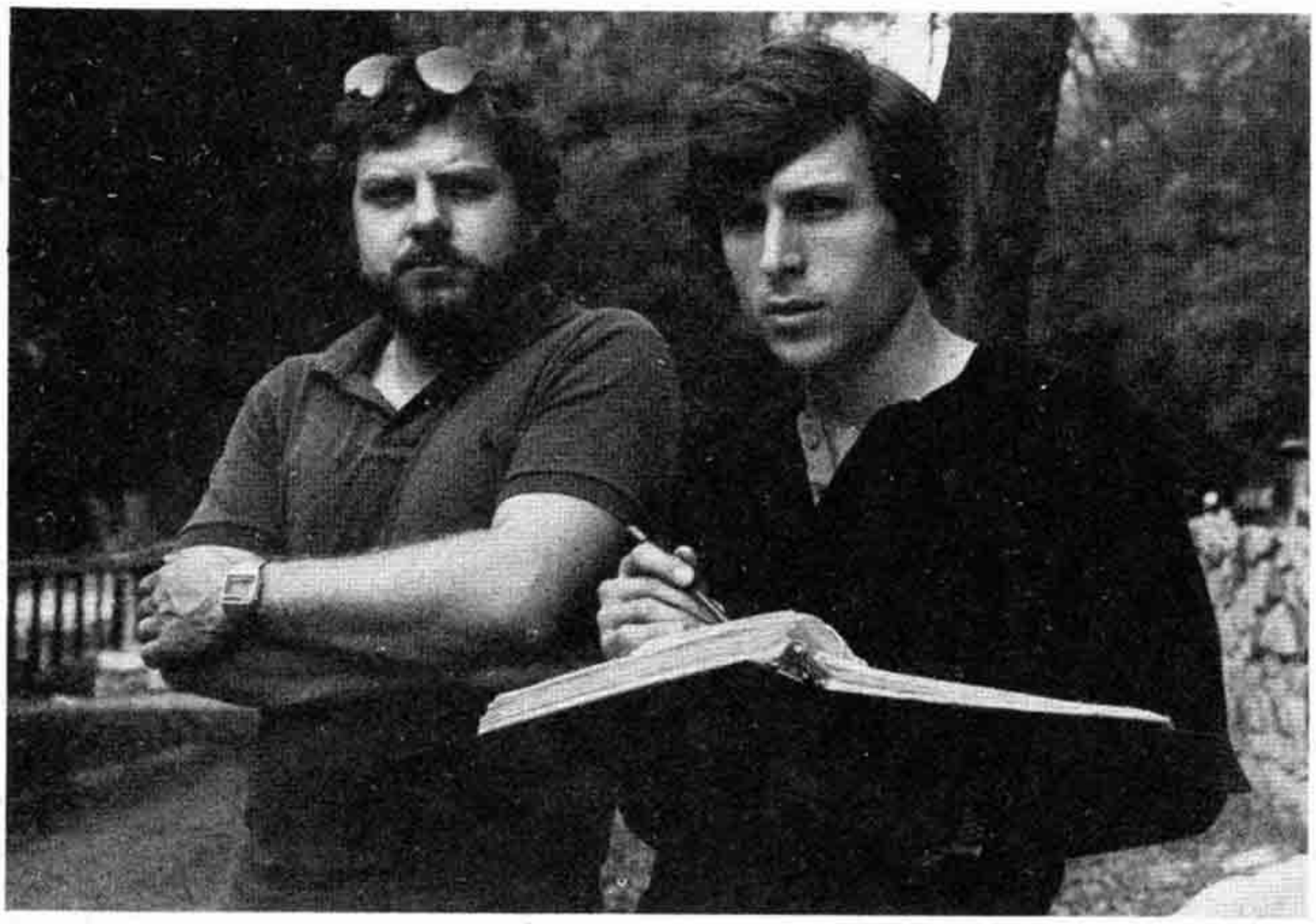
"We set out to do a tongue-in-cheek axe-ploitation film," says Robert. "Not a camp version, and not an overt spoof—we wanted to tiptoe the fine line between an all-out horror film and a comedy."

Whether that tightrope act would succeed depended largely on the Jaffes' choice of director. One early possibility was Tobe Hooper. "When we saw *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, that really did it for us—we walked out on it," says Robert. "Seeing that girl hung up on the meathook was too much for us. Later we saw it once more and got to really liking it, and understanding what Hooper was doing. We realized that he had a sense of humor about it, too. Again, it was like a classic fairy tale; there's a certain forbidden area, if you enter it it's at your risk and you must be willing to suffer the consequences.

"At the time, we were going to do *Motel Hell* for Universal, and we made a deal for Tobe Hooper to direct. But when Universal saw the script that we had developed I



Left: It sprang from their demented brains—Steven-Charles and Robert Jaffe. Above and below left: Rory Calhoun as a friendly, folksy fiend, Farmer Vincent.



think they got a little bit frightened of what they had there; it was probably a little too far out for their tastes."

Motel Hell doesn't have Tobe Hopper, but it does have chainsaws. Before seeing the film, we asked Steven-Charles Jaffe if we should expect a *Texas Chainsaw*-inspired film. "*Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was quite an amazing film; our film climaxes with quite an amazing chainsaw fight. But there are no direct references to *Chainsaw Massacre*. We simply saw the whole device of a chainsaw fight as very cinematic—a modern-day equivalent of a samurai battle."

The Jaffes' final choice for the director's chair was Kevin Connor—he of *At the Earth's Core, The People that Time Forgot* and *Arabian Adventure*. "The movie that got us excited about Kevin was his first film, made about seven years ago," says Steven-Charles. "It was called *From Beyond the Grave*, and it was one of the best horror films that I've seen in years, far better-crafted than anything out now. When we first spoke to Kevin and gave him the script, his parting remark to us was that he'd been looking for a project that would take him out of the 'family entertainment' category. We're quite sure that *Motel Hell* will take care of that problem."

Both Jaffes are very pleased with Connor's work on the film. "It's quite refreshing to see a director so well-prepared, and who knows his craft so well and at the same time understood our script in the same way that we understood it, "says Steven-Charles. "There's a very fine line of black humor running through the script that had to be handled very carefully, and Kevin has interpreted the movie exactly as we'd envisioned it. It's very rare for a producer to say that, and it's even less frequently that you'll hear that from a screenwriter."

Of course we know there are readers out there who are asking the question—just how gory is it? Steven-Charles answers, "There are a few graphic scenes, but there are a lot of scenes where we leave things up to the viewer's imagination. Graphic violence has to be used with the utmost discretion; it's like the use of swear words. If you use them flagrantly, by the end of the movie it has no dramatic effect. But even in 1980, if you keep your characters away from swearing until there's a good reason for it, it has the same dramatic impact that it had 20 years ago. By the same token if you're going to use violence dramatically, it should be saved until it has the greatest dramatic effect. That's what I believe we've done here."

Both Jaffes concede that filling the dual roles of producers and screenwriters has produced some interesting conflicts. "It's been my most difficult movie as a producer," says Steven-Charles. "Usually, I'm quite able to make a professional decision about an expenditure—say if it were to cost $2,000 to have the crew wait for something that was supposed to be on the set that morning, I'd consult the director and then weigh it myself to consider whether it was worth it. As screenwriter-producer on *Motel Hell*, I'd feel almost guilty in deciding to wait, so my impulse would be to say, no, we can't wait, let's go with what we have. But then I might realize that it is something that I would wait for even if I were just the producer—and we'd wait. Everybody can talk about little things here and there that they'd like to have, but I can confidently say that everything that we wanted to have on screen we have. In the long run, we can feel responsible if people don't like *Motel Hell*—and equally responsible if they do."

Art. Jack Kirby / © 1980 Ruby Spears

Marvel Comics veterans Jack Kirby and Steve Gerber bring a new style to Saturday morning television . . .

THUNDARR THE BARBARIAN

By BUZZ DIXON

I love working on the series," says Jack Kirby, "because the premise is so spectacular. The show is just great."

The show is *Thundarr the Barbarian*, a half-hour animation series being readied for Saturday morning on ABC by Ruby-Spears Productions, a Filmways company.

The man speaking, in case you've been hiding out for the past 40 years, is the elder statesman of comic book art, the visual designer (and some say co-creator) of most of what is sometimes called "The Marvel Universe"—the mythical land where reside such familiar Kirby-designed heroes as the Hulk, Captain America and The Fantastic Four.

Now that you know what was said and who was speaking, you may now stop to marvel a bit at the statement itself. . . .

"A Saturday morning kiddie show," you say, "*great?*"

Pause for a moment and consider the talents and the concept behind *Thundarr*, and you might understand Kirby's enthusiasm. Despite the usual mish-mosh of pablum dispensed under the guise of "adventure" by the networks, *Thundarr* promises a harder edge than has been seen before on Saturday morning television.

In addition to Jack Kirby—who serves as visual designer for the show's heroic characters, strange landscapes and bizarre creatures—the series' staff includes Steve Gerber, another Marvel expatriate, as story editor. Gerber is known far and wide as the creator of Howard the Duck, as well as his biographer for his earliest adventures (which also marked the peak of the Duck's popularity). *Thundarr*, however, bears little, if any, resemblance to that erudite fowl.

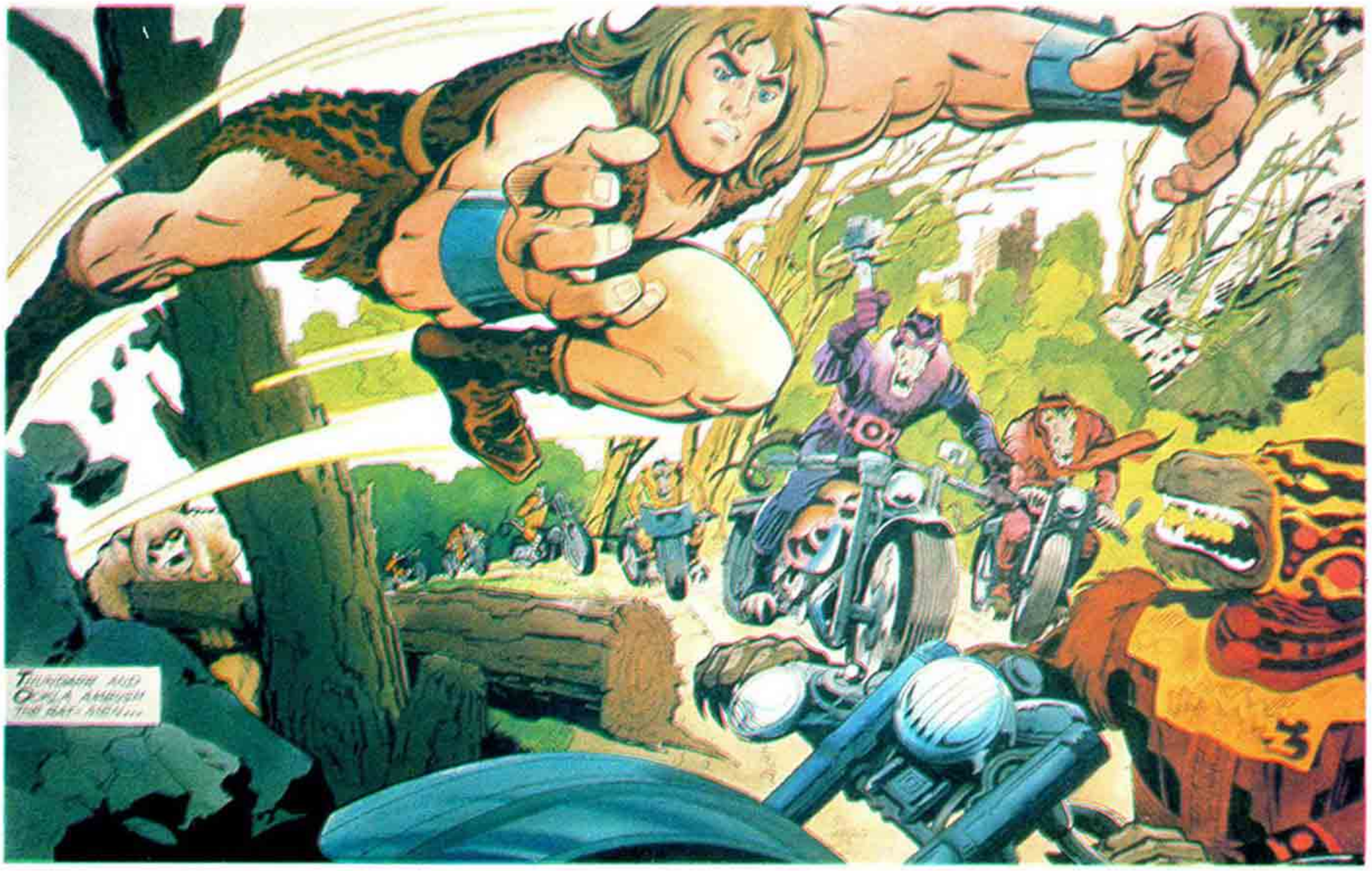
"Within the context of Saturday morning," says Gerber, "I believe *Thundarr* is one of the most original and exciting series seen in years."

Thundarr the Barbarian springs into action with companions Ariel and Ookla

Earth: 2446

Thundarr is heroic fantasy on a scale untried on Saturday morning. Set 2,000 years in the future, long after an interplanetary cataclysm has destroyed what we call civilization, the series follows Thundarr as he journeys across a backdrop of incredible locales and mind-boggling creatures.

"The fact is that we all like to speculate on the future," says Jack Kirby. "What will common, ordinary objects look like in 2446? What will New York City look like? For that matter, what will Steubenville,



Thundarr and Ookla take on a horde of ratmen in "The Secret of the Black Pearl." Notice Kirby's sense of design and scale.

Ohio, look like?"

Taking people to that future is the aim of Thundarr, an ex-slave freed by a wizard's stepdaughter, Ariel. Together with a mutant creature of the future, the ape-like Ookla the Mok, the three will make weekly excursions on New Earth—and uncover some rather unsettling situations.

The flavor of the show is decidedly grimmer than the average Saturday morning series. There is no bright and cheerful moral at the end of every episode—unless one considers "speak softly and swing a mean Sunsword" to be a moral. The characters face not "soft" challenges as do characters on other shows but real, dangerous situations that challenge the heroes.

In the typical Saturday morning animation program, the garishly clothed superhero tries to stop an equally garish supervillain from stealing the Eiffel Tower or making off with a bag of jewels. It doesn't really matter if the hero succeeds or not—once you have it, what can you do with the Eiffel Tower?

As a result, the weekly menaces never really mean anything to the average Saturday morning hero. Batman wouldn't miss a meal if he didn't recover the stolen diamonds. Superman wouldn't be inconvenienced if a villain carved his face on Mt. Rushmore.

The difference with *Thundarr* is that if Thundarr fails, he dies—or worse. Thundarr's goals and ideals are real and concrete: He fights for freedom for all—as well as to save the lives of his friends—and his own neck too!

Art: Alex Toth / © 1980 Ruby Spears

Former comic artist Alex Toth also contributed to the Thundarr series as seen above.

"Thundarr has that touch of realism blended with fantasy that makes speculation so interesting," observes artist Kirby. "Thundarr has both the audience's sympathy and envy—he has in him things we identify with the admire, though we never get tested the way he does.

"I don't know if we should be happy or sad at that," he muses.

Future History

One keystone of the realism infused in *Thundarr* is Steve Gerber's scrupulous attention to detail. While most kid-vid goes

Ariel's powers are put on display here as she creates an energy ramp in one episode of the series.

Gemeni, the evil wizard, plots with his robot knights.

on the air with precious little back history (think about it, how many superheroes revealed their origins? How many magic devices were simply introduced with no concern for who made them or why?), Gerber has created a detailed, rich, expansive future history for Thundarr.

The result is an animation series a bit more solid than the rest. There is a consistency to Thundarr's world. Despite its exotic flavor, despite the incredible variety of mutants and monsters roaming it, Thundarr's world is one single place, not merely a variety of colorful backgrounds to set stories against.

As mentioned, Thundarr's world is ours, two thousands years after a cataclysm rocked the very foundations of Earth and sent civilization plunging back into a barbarious era. Scattered about New Earth, rising like kings and gods above the masses of primitive people, are the wizards.

The wizards are the few humans left who know the glory that once was 20th-century Earth. They are the only ones who held on to the ancient technologies—and added to them with newer technologies to include parapsychology and magic.

From their strongholds they dominate the shattered remains of New Earth, lording over the scattered, superstitious tribes that dwell on the land.

Due to climatic changes caused by the cataclysm—as well as occasional experiments by the wizards—New Earth is crawling with new life: mutants, monsters, strange people and beasts. It is a world totally unlike ours—yet set in the ruins of everything we consider familiar.

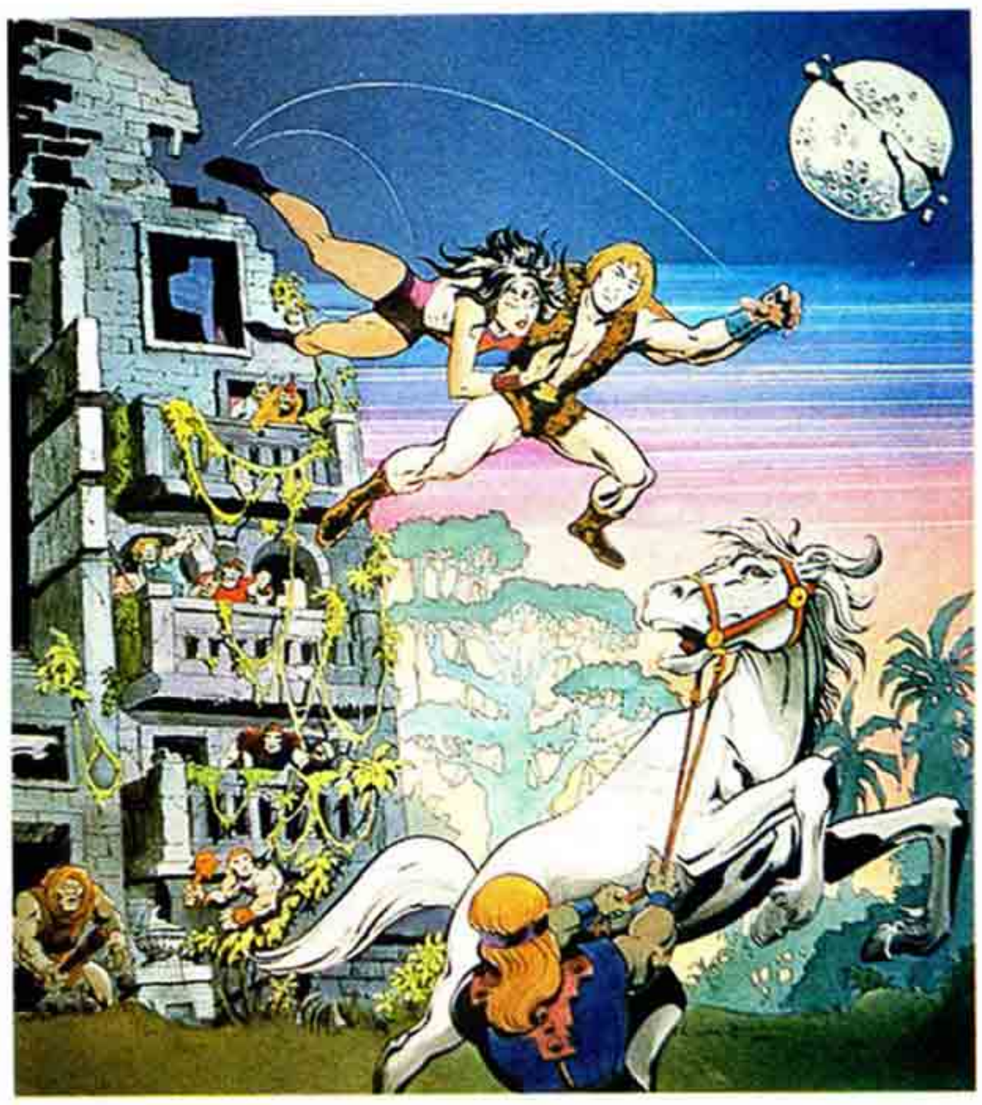
Thundarr himself was born the slave to one of the evil wizards that roamed the land, Sabian. Thundarr was different from other slaves—bigger, tougher, stronger, more intelligent and with a soul that yearned for freedom.

Love for Freedom

Freedom is a key word in this big barbarian's vocabulary. Time and again Thundarr is seen rushing into the middle of a battle—no questions asked—to free a slave or rescue a hostage. To Thundarr there is nothing more wonderful or pre-

Art: Don Norman / © 1980 Ruby Spears

Artist John Dorman also did some art for the series. Here, the three heroes are ready to charge into the coming battle.



Kirby's action art remains unchallenged, as seen in these scenes.

cious.

Needless to say, this love for freedom soon caused Thundarr to run afoul of Sabian. Imprisoned in the wizard's dungeon, the legend of Thundarr might have ended then and there.

Enter the second character in the series, Ariel. Ariel was Sabian's step-daughter. An exotic beauty, well-versed and educated, Ariel herself has some of the magic talents of her stepfather and the other wizards.

Sabian, fearing competition, deliberately kept her magic knowledge and skills to a minimum. Though she has the talent, Ariel doesn't have the power or control of a full wizard.

Attracted to Thundarr because of his rebellious nature, Ariel helped him escape. She also provided him with the Sunsword, his principle weapon.

The Sunsword is an energy weapon capable of slicing through almost anything or parrying magic bolts of energy. In its "off" mode it looks like nothing more than a common sword hilt; in Thundarr's hands it is transformed into an awesome weapon.

Once freed, Thundarr lead his fellow slaves in rebellion. It was during this rebellion that Thundarr met Ookla the Mok.

Describing a Mok is rather difficult; they have to be seen to be believed. Their appearance is fierce and their temperment is explosive. Near human in intelligence, they speak a primitive language of grunts and growls.

Ookla is Thundarr's fast and loyal friend. Though fearsome in appearance, Ookla is also the source of the series comic relief.

"Picture this hairy mutant confronted with some complicated relic of the 20th century," says Steve Gerber, "a helicopter, for example. He's seen it fly, he's watched the controls be manipulated. Now Thundarr and Ariel are in danger and Ookla *must* make the machine work again.

"So he grabs the joystick and, forgetting his own strength, rips it out of the floor. Fuming, snarling, he climbs atop the 'copter and tries spinning the blades by hand.

"Finally, frustrated beyond all reason, he makes the machine fly his own way; he picks it up and *pitches* it at the enemy, saving Thundarr's life—but also wrecking their means of transportation!"

Getting the series on the air has been a long, slow, nerve-wracking process. Producers Joe Ruby and Ken Spears and story editor Steve Gerber were constantly on guard to maintain *Thundarr*'s high level of adventure.

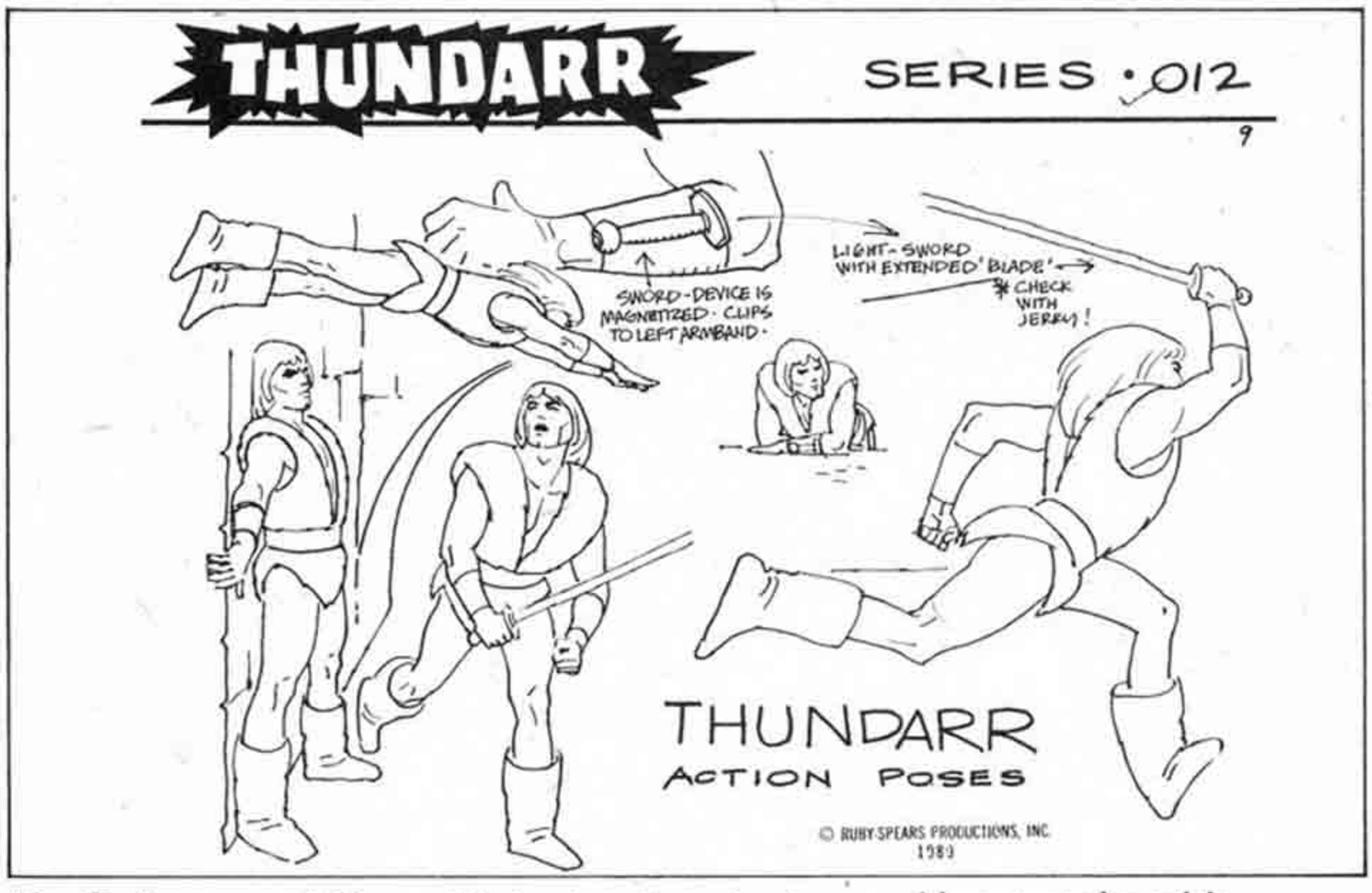
Despite minor setbacks, despite daily frustrations, despite continuous attention to detail, the show seems to be a success—from their point of view.

As it stands now, *Thundarr the Barbarian* comes closer than any previous Saturday morning series in capturing the spirit of heroic fantasy adventure. Despite the problems and pains, the series seems head and shoulders above the rest of the kid-vid ghetto.

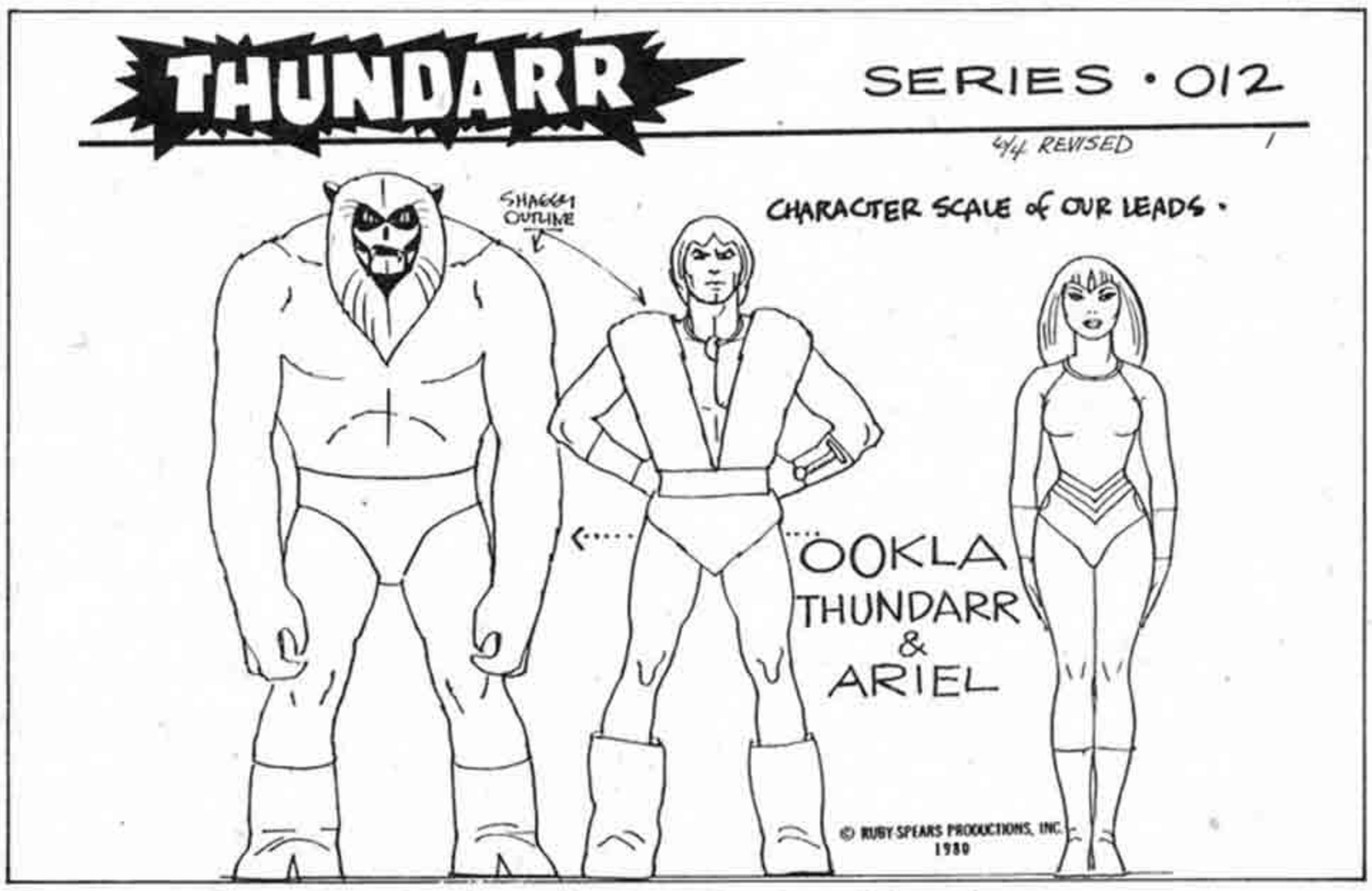
The only question now is whether it will be as big a hit with its audience.

THUNDARR
SERIES • 012
4/3
© RUBY-SPEARS PRODUCTIONS, INC. 1980
THUNDARR'S SWORD HILT IS HELD ON MAGNETIZED METALLIC CUFF...
WHEN SWORD HILT IS DRAWN FROM CUFF A POWERFUL FORCE IS ACTIVATED...
FORCE BUILDS IN POWER AS IT LEAPS FROM SWORD HILT...
FULL POWER OF FORCE CRACKS LIKE THUNDER AND FLASHES LIKE LIGHTNING...

This Kirby model sheet details the way Thundarr's sunsword operates.



Alex Toth prepared this model sheet so the animators could capture the spirit.



Here is another Toth model sheet, this time showing all three heroes.

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He Knows . . .

(continued from page 29)

still thudding against your ribcage and you have to fight the urge to hide your eyes or run. (The last place you think of retreating to is the restroom, especially after you see what happens to the girl in the movie who does exactly that because she can't bear to watch another minute of a horror movie!)

Certain sequences are likely to arouse a feeling of *deja vu*; no great knowledge of film lore is necessary to figure out where that scene with the girl in the shower came from, but only the more confirmed filmgoers will recognize the origin of—well, better not give it totally away—let's just say, that thing sitting in the bottom of the aquarium.

"I said, let's also be different and pay homage to all those film people—Alfred Hitchcock, Carpenter—all those films that have thrilled the audiences." Mastroianni's approach may not be all that different, homages being a kind of regular thing these days (DePalma's obsessive homages to Hitchcock spring to mind), but they are effective and provide for some needed laughs before the lovelorn psychopath strikes again.

Although Mastroianni wanted to title his four-week wonder *The Uninvited*, it was rejected because of a possible conflict with an old Ray Milland movie of that name. The producers went with *Blood Wedding* instead, though that resulted in another conflict with a play by Garcia Lorca. No one was worried, since it wasn't likely that most people who turned out to see Mastroianni's film were going to be aware of the work of a Spanish poet who died in the 1930s.

Joe Beruh took *Blood Wedding* out to the West Coast for the majors and the large independents to screen. He didn't get very far MGM was the second company to look at it. "David Beglemen [head of MGM production] saw it," Mastroianni recalls, "took it home to watch a second time with some of his people and he called Joe. Joe said, 'Well, I need the film back to show to 20th Century-Fox tomorrow! David said, 'I don't want to return the print. I want to make a deal.' "

It wasn't blackmail exactly—not at the terms they later agreed upon.

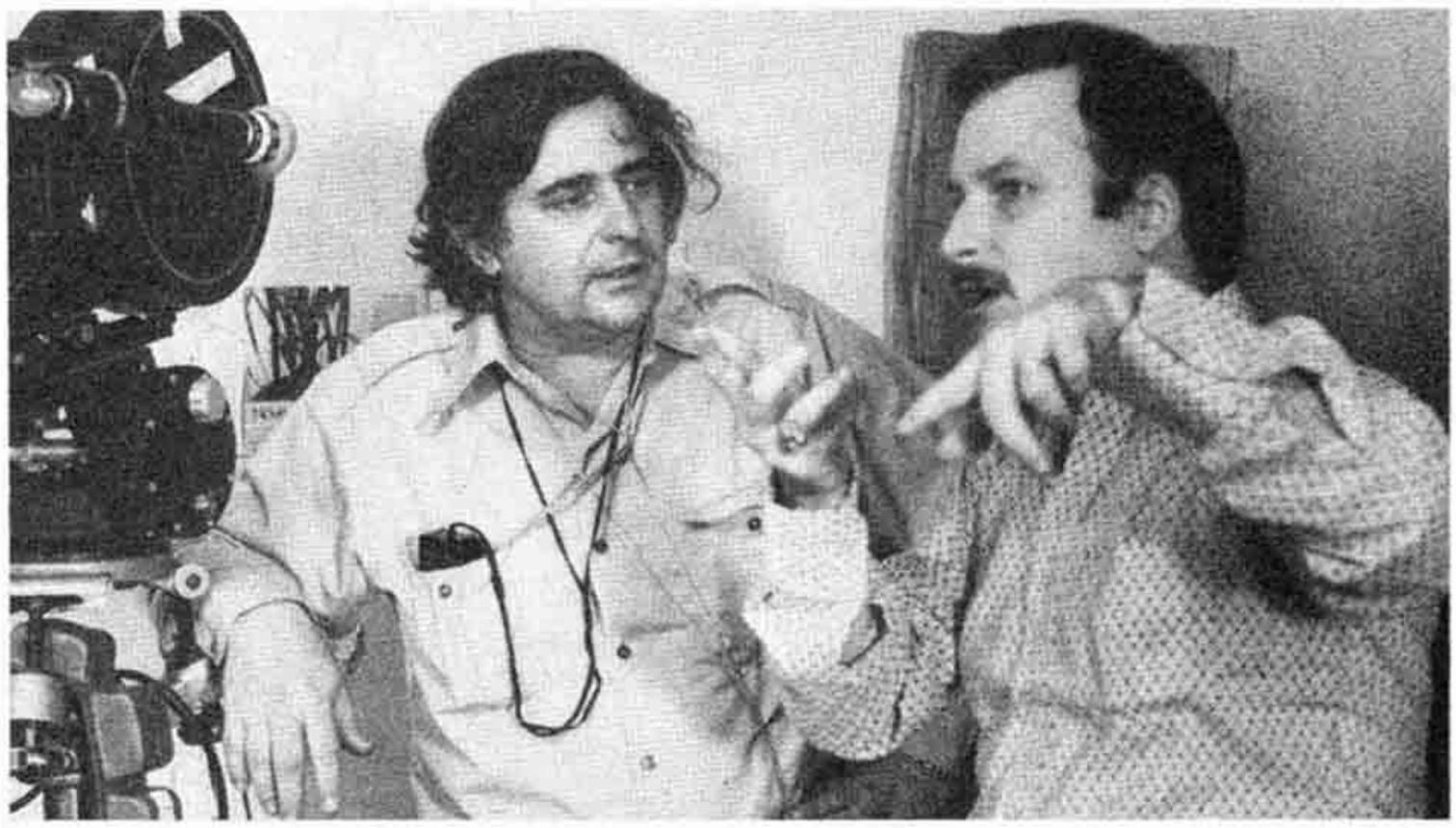
Carte Blanche

When Mastroianni heard about the deal he was elated. But he appealed to Begleman to allow him to do the additional editing that was required. "So David, who's a terrific guy, said I had carte blanche to do whatever I wanted to do with it." He put Mastroianni up for eight weeks in the Beverly Hills Hotel, lavishing on him the time and money to make the changes, which while relatively minor, helped to enhance the film's impact—especially in terms of the pacing and the sound. "The sound is phenomenal. They came up with sound effects you never dreamed of."

MGM came up with something else too—another title: *He Knows You're Alone*. Mastroianni admits to not being particularly happy with the change. "How can people remember it?" He facetiously suggests the titles for the sequels—*He Knows You're Not Alone, He Knew You Were Alone but Now You've Gone Out.*

But the money, in the bank and in the offing, may make the new title easier to stomach. United Artists, which distributes MGM's releases, is treating *He Knows You're Alone* as a major film; it is currently playing in 1,200 locations across the country, after opening in selected regions in late August.

By coincidence, the calls from California informing Mastroianni of his success reached him at about the same time he'd attended a screening of *Friday the Thirteenth*—the surprise blockbuster of the summer season. Mastroianni is not particularly enamored of *Friday*, and was surprised that a major studio—in this case Paramount—picked it up. But on the other hand, he was surprised that *his* film was picked up. He obviously hopes that *He Knows You're Alone* does anywhere near



Mastroianni directs. In case you're wondering, yes he is related to Marcello, though he's American born and bred.

the business that *Friday*—with a diabolical knifer all its own—has managed to do.

Now Armand Mastroianni is what he wasn't before, which is to say—*Hot*. All sorts of people are offering him deals. But he wants to steer clear from the horror genre; *He Knows You're Alone* has given him the credibility—and bankability—to do what he has always wanted to do. "I like to do things with strong dramatic content or comedy—like a *Breaking Away* type of film—a boy who doesn't want to remain in his father's business." Incidentally, that business in Mastroianni's case is a funeral business, so there still is a certain thematic consistency, however tenuous, in the director's conceptions.

He has been given opportunities to do a number of different scripts. The one that appeals to him now commands $5 million budget, not much by Hollywood terms, "but to me that's really big." There are, in addition, a couple of ideas Mastroianni is developing on his own. One, he admits, is at least peripherally related to the horror genre that *He Knows You're Alone* so manifestly represents. "But it's not what I'd call an exploitative kill 'em for kill em's sake type of film," Mastroianni says. "It's more of a thriller-mystery, a puzzle ... because I think today's audiences, contrary to what people think, are sophisticated. So they can sit there and think rather than just be shocked. Let's shock them and let them think at the same time."

de Toth

(continued from page 43)

Picasso-ish painting and Picasso's distortion is that Picasso knew anatomy like a surgeon, and when he distorted, it was a conscious distortion. Yes, a 3-D director technician has to be a surgeon, a technician fully aware of the forces and factors at his disposal. It is not guesswork. He has to be a mathematician and an optician to be able to give comfort to the viewers.

Another factor of the short life of 3-D was the cheap lenses issued and the quick-money-grabbing profiteering consortium who had the right to sell these torture instruments which contributed so greatly to its temporary eclipse.

House of Wax is now recognized as a classic. What were your thoughts upon first reading Crane Wilbur's screenplay? What was the nature of any changes made in the course of shooting?

You can't start off being so pompous and conceited as to say "I am going to make a classic." All you can do is try your best. A lot of "classic" motion pictures unfortunately remained undiscovered. I feel very lucky that *House of Wax* now takes its place in the house of fame, and I believe this is because consciously I was not trying to reach for 3-D effects, I was trying to tell a story.

After viewing *Mystery of the Wax Museum*, I thought we had to update, humanize the story, which had only a mechanical basic plotline, pure hokum, but with great promise. Producer Brynie Foy was extremely helpful in pointing out some of the atmosphere to me; he'd lived through that particular era, as had his contemporary, Crane Wilbur. I could not recognize Wilbur sitting face to face—he continuously sat in profile, the famous profile he showed to Pearl White in *The Perils of Pauline*. And my peril was to get away from their cobwebs of yesterday, but use the wonderful information they gave me, translated into an undated film.

If directing consisted of adhering strictly to a screenplay, then a pharmacist would be the best director, preparing prescriptions. You adhere only to the characters, who dictate the story. One cannot be blind, even with one eye, to the spontaneous happenings of the moment, which could not possibly be anticipated weeks, months, sometimes years in advance of the shooting. I stayed within the framework of the screenplay, but most scenes were changed.

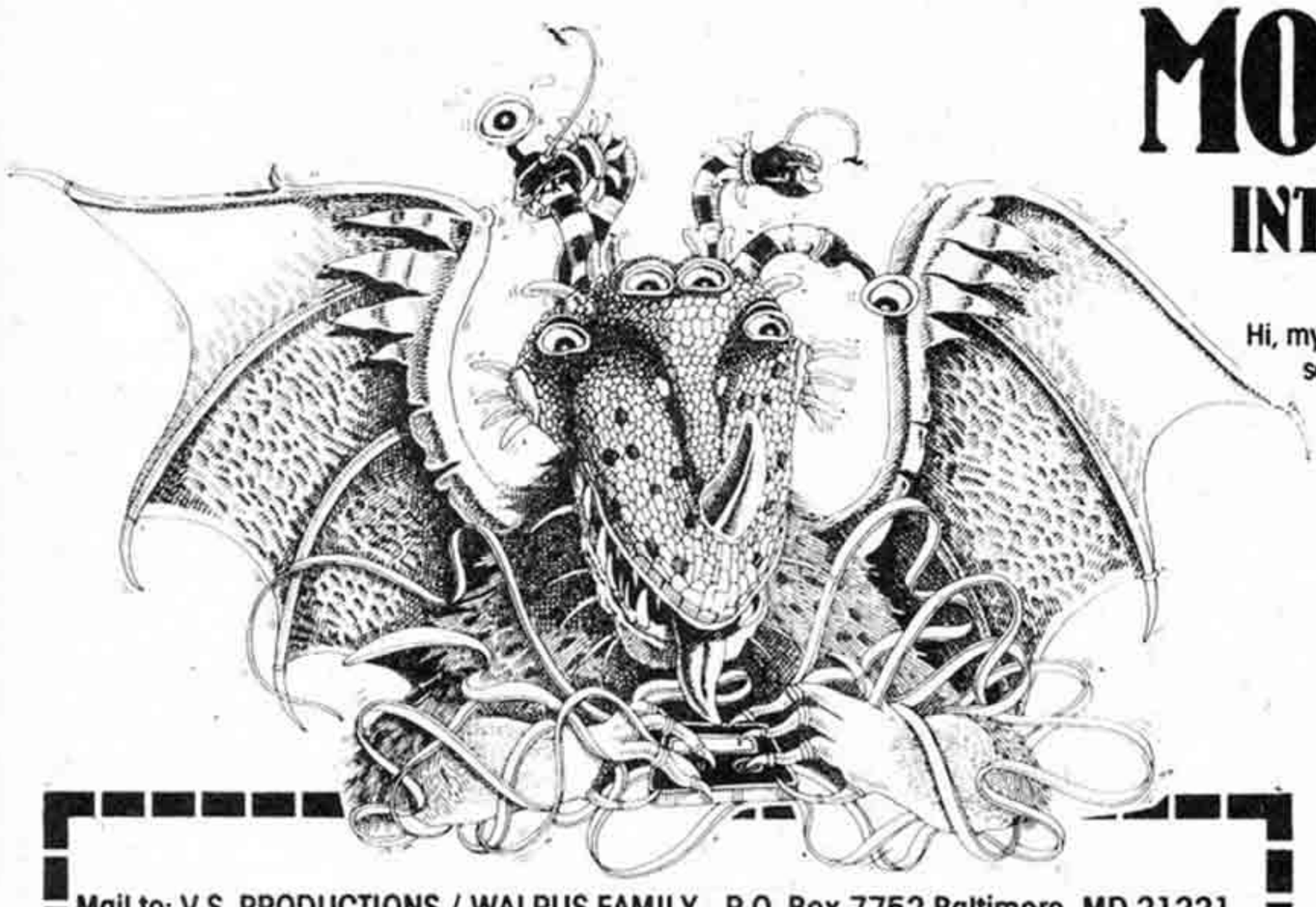
I hope this delay did not cause you too much inconvenience, and I would like to call your attention to the fact that I am working on a book, and all the above will be part of it.

Best of luck, and thank you very much for your interest.

—*Andre de Toth*

MONSTER LOVERS

INTRODUCING SCARY TAPES FROM VINCENT



Hi, my name is Vincent. I am 9 years old, and live in Baltimore, Maryland. I enjoy scary sounds and monsters very much, but was always disappointed because the stores never have any scary records or especially tapes. So I made them myself, and my dad said I should let other people share in my fun. So here they are, my first five selections of what I hope can become a large collection.

If you like scary sound effects and ghost stories, you'll love my weird tapes. I'll make your skin crawl with spine chilling suspense and shock you with sudden terror.

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Thanks, from your new friend,
VINCENT

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Conan

(continued from page 15)

tion to Conan. Conan made his literary debut in the 1932 story "The Phoenix on the Sword."

However, Conan proved Howard's last memorable creation. Not exactly a mentally stable sort, Howard killed himself upon hearing of his mother's imminant demise. The year was 1936 and Howard was a mere 30 years of age. Conan, however, refused to die. The Conan magazine series (and, later, book series) continued with new tales being penned by L. Sprague deCamp, Lin Carter and Bjorn Nyberg. Two Marvel comic books, *Conan the Barbarian* and *The Savage Sword of Conan*, have re-introduced the barbarbian to a new generation of adventure fans.

"Conan" Goes to the Movies

It wasn't until the early 1970s, however, that Conan became noticed by movie makers. At that point, *Conan* associate producer Ed Summer met *Conan* producer Ed Pressman, the latter then serving the same function on Brian DePalma's *Phantom of the Paradise*. "I'd known Brian de Palma for a long time," recalls Summer, "and he asked me to help him do a comic book based on *The Phantom*. At that point, I became friendly with Ed Pressman. A short time later he asked me if there were any film projects I had in the back of my mind that could be considered commercially feasible.

"I told him about Conan. He had never heard of the character. I not only explained it all to him but I found out where all the rights were. Ed, an attorney and I spent the next year and a half clearing the rights."

At that point, work began on what would eventually become the first of three scripts. "Roy Thomas (Marvel's recently departed *Conan* writer-editor) and I cowrote the first script," Summer says. "Then, Oliver Stone wrote one. Eventually, director John Milius wrote one. I'm being very simplistic about all this of course, because there were countless revisions done on all te scripts. The scripts kept on changing because of various budgetary reasons and problems involving the Howard estate. It was pretty tricky."

Adding to the general trickiness was the fact that Hollywood did not seem overly anxious to have a barbarian in their midst. "It's always hard to get financial backing from a major studio," Summer explains, "so I'd have to say that we had our problems getting financing. Complicating matters was the fact that we had to contend with a constant change of studio administrations. The head of a studio would like the script and the idea one week and, the next week, there'd be a new head of the same studio who would just hate it.

"We also went through a lot of would-be directors on the project. John Milius was going to do it at first but he began having problems with *Big Wednesday* and pulled out. Then, Ridley (*ALIEN*) Scott was interested in it, but he got involved in other commitments. Alan (*Fame*) Parker was also intrigued by the idea but. . . . Things just kept on shuffling around. Finally, John Milius became available once again and we really wanted him. In fact, the first script I wrote was written expressly for John. I've always felt that he had the perfect sensibility for Conan. He has one of the most incredible senses of high adventure and romance of any director in Hollywood today. He's sort of a romantic throwback. He directs in the spirit of *The Crimson Pirate*. John, however, was committed to do a project for Dino De Laurentiis. We made a deal. In lieu of John doing the other project, he agreed to do ours. We, in turn, agreed to bring *Conan* to De Laurentiis. It was kind of a trade-off." Because of the trade-off *Conan* also inherited a major distributor, Universal Pictures; a company tied to De Laurentiis' American output.

The popular Marvel version.

Location Hunt

With Milius now helming *Conan*, locations were scouted for filming. "John has some prejudices against process photography," says Summer, "which is one of the reasons why the film has been rebudgeted so many times. One of our initial concepts was to film everything on location. Suddenly we were faced with a movie that had an insurmountable budget. We had to compromise a bit. Still, we scouted out a lot of great locations: Canada, Spain, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia. Since *Conan* takes place in a mythical time, it was necessary to come up with places that wouldn't make it look like a John Ford Western."

The filmmaking crew agreed that Yugoslavia was the most exotic locale. July of 1980 was slated as the starting date. Then, abruptly, the schedule was altered. "Everyone knew that production was going to have to be put off from July because of various technical problems," explains Charles Lippincott of the De Laurentiis organization. "They knew, for instance, that the sets needed wouldn't be constructed in time. After [President] Tito's death in Yugoslavia, it was impossible to judge what the political situation in that country would be in January of 1981, the new starting date. So, although the Eastern European locations were very good, they scouted around again, coming up with a location in Spain."

Moving his vision from Yugoslavia to Spain was a befuddled Ron Cobb, the movie's art director. Cobb, known in science fiction and fantasy circles for his extraterrestrial designs in *Star Wars* and his spaceship decor in *ALIEN*, was too excited by the project to be put off by the geographical difficulties.

"This is really going to be fun," Cobb says en route to Spain. "I've always loved movies, although I never intended to wind up in the industry as such. I'm an artist and it just seemed to be the ideal outlet for me. It's a combination of art and science and I've always been interested in both.

"This movie is going to be wild. It's based on an original screenplay by Milius, who is, of course, also directing. The movie occupies a niche in the Conan mythology that neither Robert E. Howard or L. Sprague de Camp covered. It should lock the story together. It's essentially the origins of Conan, going back to his childhood and taking him into manhood. I've always liked John's work and this is very much up his alley. I mean, John is Hollywood's barbarian anyhow.

"Even though I don't have a deep affinity for the Howard material, there is a lot of this that I find intriguing. It's an interesting, old fashioned, romantic tale with sex and violence and *everything*."

Creating Cultures

The burly, bearded Cobb emits a chuckle. "This assignment isn't exactly up my alley. I've had to search about a lot in order to connect with things. What I enjoy doing, though, is creating cultures. I find that really exciting: inventing architectural styles and cultures. John wants me to handle costume designs too. I'll have to come up with a design motiff that is recognizably Atlantean and another one that will hold true for the followers of Seth. There are just so many little nuances to his movie that require so much thought. What does a Sumerian village look like? A Sumerian cart? A Sumerian sword? That stuff delights me. I'd like to get more into invention than either Howard or de Camp ever did. They both borrowed a lot from medieval history. I want to invent from scratch and make everything look functional. I don't want to make Conan's world a steal from the Persians or a steal from the Celts. I want to come up with a unique look that suggests past cultures but doesn't look like outright theft."

Cobb is already hard at work reshaping the revamped set constructions. "The temple of Seth should be an amazing set. It's got a 120-foot staircase that goes up

Overlooking frost-covered Cimmeria, a young Conan is told, "One day lad, all this will be yours."

What's a sword and sorcery movie without some sorcery? Meet the Thing from the Crypt.

the side of a mountain. There's a great gate atop. It's somewhat reminiscent of Howard's elephant towers. We're going through several variations on the basic design right now. The final design will be dependent on what location we eventually come up with.

"We've had to modify several of our original set ideas outside amphitheater, for instance. For a while, we were going to build a gigantic amphitheater inside a large cavern; sort of an enclosed Roman arena. We had found this wonderful cavern in Yugoslavia that we were going to use. We were going to build a second interior in a large studio with a flat floor for the close-up shots. But now that we can't shoot in Yugoslavia, we're just not finding an equivalent cavern in Spain. So we might have to move the whole amphitheater concept outdoors.

"I know this all sounds like a lot of hard work but, believe me, this is fun. The *Conan* sets don't pose as many problems as did the sets for *ALIEN*. Now *that* got really *insane* at times."

Although Cobb good-naturedly concedes that he might be "spending the next five years of my life working on this movie," everyone concerned with the film seem to think that the sacrifices of time and energy are worth it.

"I'd love to see this as the first of a Conan series of films," says associate producer Summer. "Imagine . . . Conan could become to movie audiences of the 1980s and 1990s what the Tarzan series was to audiences in the 30s and 40s."

New

From the publishers of STARLOG

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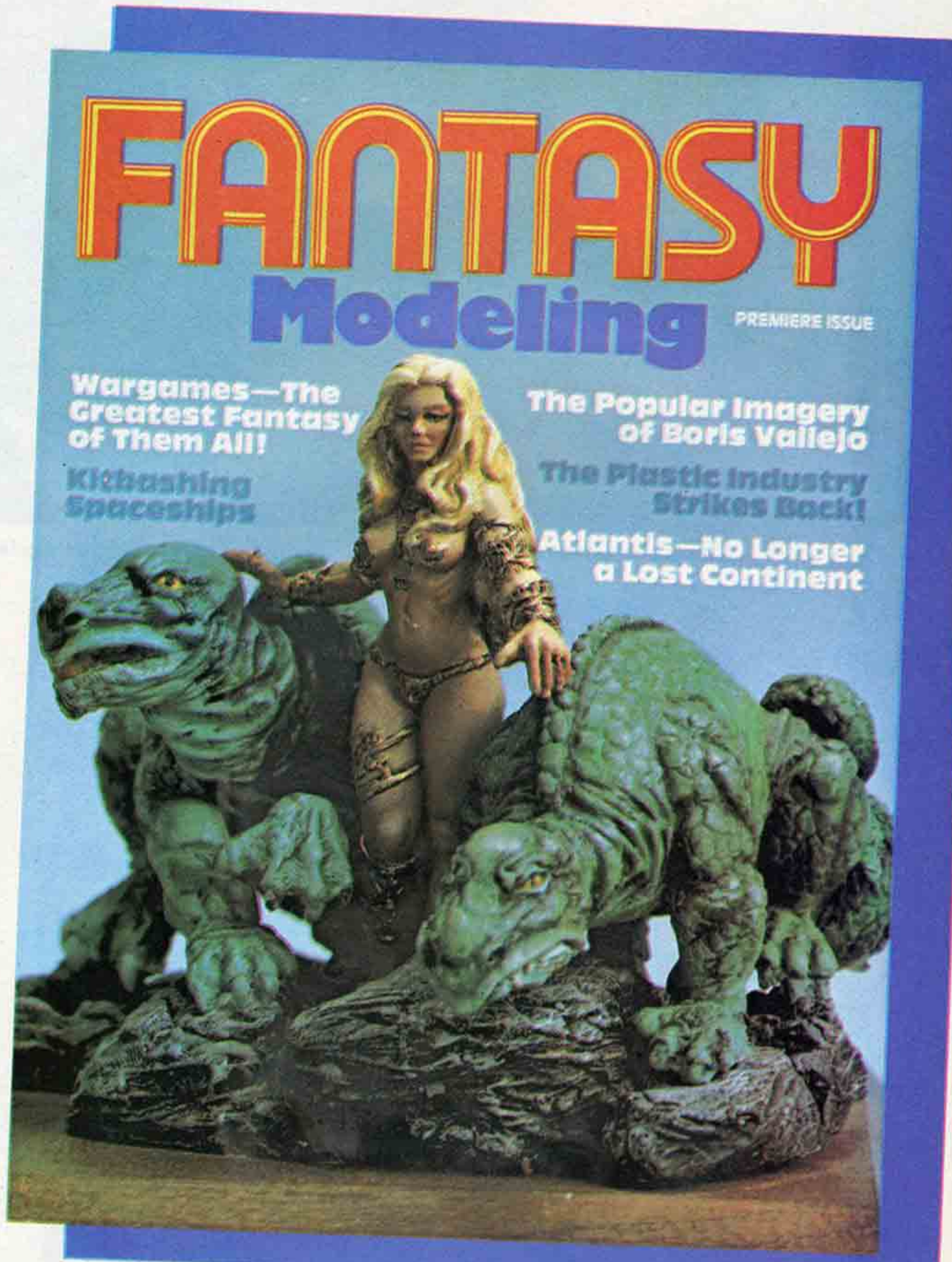

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FA9

Count Fangor

by Howard Cruse

I DON'T KNOW WHY I **BOTHER** STALKING THE NIGHT FOR **VICTIMS**...

I **ALWAYS** GET **REJECTED!**

Ooh! Ooh! Ooh! Ooh!..Stayin' alive...stayin' alive...

STILL— HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL...

HELLO, THERE! MY NAME IS **COUNT FANGOR** AND I NOTICE YOU'RE HERE **ALONE!**

I WAS THINKING MAYBE WE COULD **HANG OUT TOGETHER** THIS EVENING...**GROOVE** ON EACH OTHER, Y'KNOW...HAVE A LITTLE **FUN**...SEE WHAT **HAPPENS**...

IS THAT **SO?**

WOULD YOU MIND **SPELLING OUT** EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE IN **MIND,** COUNT?

WELL, PUTTING IT **BLUNTLY,** I'D LIKE TO PLUNGE MY **FANGS** INTO YOUR **NECK,** GORGE MYSELF ON YOUR **BLOOD,** AND TRANSFORM YOU INTO A **VAMPIRE** WHO WILL BE MY **SLAVE FOREVER!**

SORRY... I'M NOT INTERESTED!

HMM...

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THEN CAN I TURN MYSELF INTO A **LITTLE FURRY BAT** AND RIDE AROUND INSIDE YOUR **PURSE?**

BONK!

GET OUTA HERE, YOU **JERK!** THAT'S **RIDICULOUS!**

OOF!

I'VE **GOTTA** FIND OUT WHAT NON-VAMPIRES **DO** ON DATES!

CRUSE

MONSTER INVASION

Up-to-the-minute warnings of what's coming your way!

MOVIES

CAVEMAN: It's our unpleasant duty to report that the re-teaming of stop-motion animators Jim Danforth and David Allen, as reported in our issue #8, hasn't quite worked out. Danforth has left the project, apparently due to creative differences with the film's producers, and has left for England to join Ray Harryhausen on *Clash of the Titans*. Stop-motion chores will now be in the very capable hands of David Allen, and hopefully the film's tentative release date—February 1980—will be met. Meanwhile, here's a look at one of *Caveman's* live-action critters, a neanderthal man constructed by up-and-coming monster-maker Chris Walas.

3-D REVIVAL: Just as we're getting ready to go to press, we've been hearing rumors from all over—*3-D is coming back!* Not only does Irwin Yablans hope to shoot *Halloween 2* in 3-D (see Jamie Lee Curtis interview, this issue), but there has been talk that Romero may go 3-D with *Creepshow,* and that Sean Cunningham may be mounting a 3-D sequel to *Friday the 13th!* We cannot vouch for the authenticity of any of these rumors—yet. But where there's smoke, there's fire. Keep your eyes on these pages for future developments!

OUTLANDS: An epidemic of homicidal psychosis has hit Con-Am 27, a mining colony on Io, the second moon of Jupiter. Sean Connery plays a federal marshal whose job is to learn the source of the insanity, and, if possible, put an end to it. The director of the colony, played by Peter Boyle, seems determined to see him fail. If we wanted to be glib about it, we could say that this one looks like it's going to be a cross between *High Noon* and *ALIEN.* But we won't. John Stears is in charge of visual effects, Peter Hyams is directing, and release is scheduled for spring '81.

TOYS: Alfred Sole—director and co-writer of *Alice Sweet Alice* and *Tanya's Island*—has a new project in the works. "It started as almost a James Bond-type film," says Sole's co-scriptor Mick Garris, "and developed into a black comedy-horror-adventure." The story concerns a series of bizarre deaths ocurring among the nation's top business executives, inflicted by a series of strange toys. The remaining captains of American industry join in hiring John Merritt, soldier of fortune, whose job it is to find the mastermind behind the ghastly killings. Financing may be forthcoming from a major studio, but Garris says that the project will go before the cameras with or without the support of a major.

Neither filmmaker will be idle while waiting for *Toys* to come together. Sole was recently signed to direct *Ghouls* for Mel Simon productions, and Garris has taken over scripting chores on the "top secret" John Carpenter project that was shelved when Carpenter got the chance to make *Escape from New York.* "It concerns an actual Navy experiment conducted in 1943," says Garris. "The object of the

Caveman's* neanderthal. Walas' work will also be seen in *Scanners* and *Dragonslayer.

experiment was to render a battleship invisible by the use of magnetic and sonic waves. According to reports, the experiment actually succeeded—but when the ship reappeared, every man on board was insane and unable to say what had ocurred." In order to insure a fresh approach, Garris says he wrote his screenplay without reading or referring to the Carpenter treatment. Garris' version, planned as an Avco Embassy project, will be set in two times, the early 1940s and the present day.

In addition to his scripting chores and his day-job as an executive consultant on horror and fantasy at Avco, Garris is an interviewer-host for a series of fantasy films on a Los Angeles cable TV station; this month his cablecast features *Alice Sweet Alice* (also released as *Communion*) and his guests are the film's star Brooke Shields and director Alfred Sole.

POPEYE: The Paramount-Walt Disney co-production based on the life and times of Elzie Segar's comic strip super-sailor will be released nationwide this December. The film, directed by Robert Altman from a script by Jules Feiffer, begins with a shipwreck that brings Popeye to the town of Sweethaven, and to a fateful meeting with a young woman named Olive Oyl, who is engaged to the town bully, Bluto. What follows is a tale of love, revenge, kidnapping, sunken treasure, hamburgers and spinach. Scattered throughout the proceedings are several musical production numbers featuring words and music by Harry Nilsson. Supporting Robin Williams as Popeye and Shelley Duvall as Olive are Paul Dooley as Wimpy and Paul L. Smith as Bluto.

KNIGHTRIDERS: "Fight or Yield" is the motto of the Knightriders, a troupe of motorcycle enthusiasts whose passion for the era of chivalry has developed into a full lifestyle. Pictured above are Tom Savini as Morgan, a lovable rogue also known as the Black Knight, and Christine Forrest as Angie, the spunky chief mechanic for the traveling band of cyclists.

HAPPY HOWL-O-WEEN!

It's our favorite time of year again! We're sure ready for it—we're still wearing our costumes from last year!

And, speaking of things to wear, the producers of *The Howling* (previewed on page 9) were hoping to make this an extra-special holiday by premiering Joe Dante's werewolf tale across the country in late October. At the eleventh hour, they decided that they needed more time to complete the film's very special FX, so the release has been delayed until spring of 1981. But here's the *good* news: When that decision was made, the producers had already ordered promotional T-shirts bearing full-color artwork and the film's logo. By the kind cooperation of Avco Embassy Pictures and the producers of *The Howling*, we've gotten hold of 75 of these T-shirts, just for our readers, and for the first time we'll be able to get them to you *before* the film opens! This time, we've made the contest a little trickier. At the top of this page, you'll see a pair of Howl-o-ween fangs. The same picture is reproduced on another page of this issue of FANGORIA. In order to be eligible for our T-shirt drawing, you must find the other set of fangs (hint: it's *small*) and send us a postcard (or letter with your entry on the outside back of the envelope) stating the page number where the other fangs are located and your T-shirt size (S, M or L, men's sizes). Send your entry to Find the Fangs in the FANGORIA Contest, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. If you're one of the 75 winners, we'll have your T-shirt (plus a button bearing *The Howling*'s logo—and maybe another surprise!) quicker than you can say "Fangs a lot"!

"NAME THAT THING!" RESULTS

The response to this contest was pretty underwhelming—less than 100 entries—but those of you who did enter really knew your stuff! Every one of you deserves recognition for your efforts, so we hereby salute you!

Now get out your back issue #7 and turn to page 60. Here are the official correct answers:

1. Peter Boyle undergoes a makeup transformation at the hands of Bill Tuttle for *Young Frankenstein*.
2. Tom Stovall, playing the role of Davis in Bert I. Gordon's *Food of the Gods*, is the victim of giant wasp-stings. Makeup by Tom Burman.
3. Makeup artist Rick Baker and assistant David Cellitti sculpt a gorilla body for a test suit for Dino De Laurentiis' *King Kong*.
4. Bill Tuttle again, holding the headpiece for the suit worn by Rosco Lee Brown in his role as Box, the robot of *Logan's Run*.
5. Lee Greenway finishes up a test makeup for *The Thing (from Another World)*.
6. Christopher Lee sports a fine hand-laid beard, courtesy of makeup artist Roy Ashton, for the title role of *Rasputin, the Mad Monk*.
7. A double for Jeff Goldblum, Jack Bellicec of Phil Kaufman's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, in Tom Burman's formative pod makeup.
8. The toughest, and properly identified by only a distinguished few. This is a head cast made by Rick Baker of his wife, Elaine, as a preliminary step in constructing the monster baby suit worn by Elaine Baker in Larry Cohen's *It's Alive*.

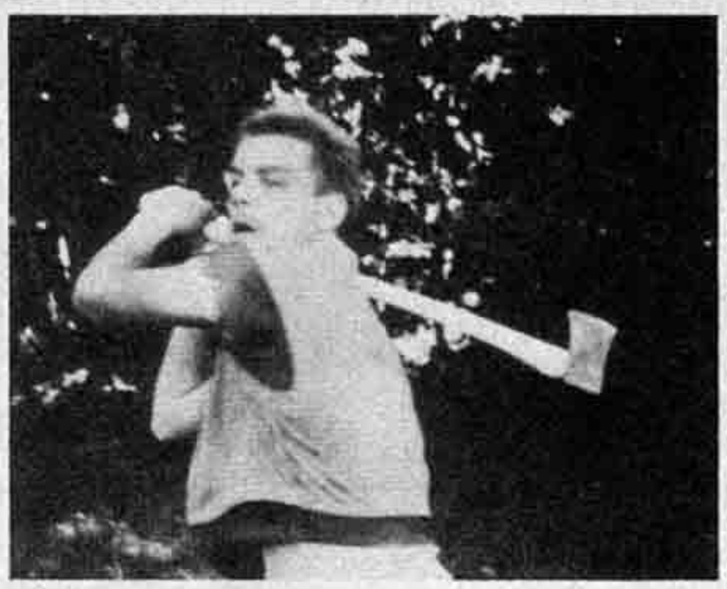
And here's our list of illustrious winners: Top of the Heap: Bart J. Mixon of South Houston, TX. Other Erudite Experts: Darrell Philips, Saginaw, MI; John Vulich, Fresno, CA; Paul Watts, Irving, TX; Andrew Goad, Stratford, CT; Tony Gardner, North Olmstead, OH; Kendall Blose, Apollo, PA: Hilliard Ballard, Horse Shoe, NC; Oscar Benjamin, Castro Valley, CA; and Tracy Goodman, Augusta, GA.

Winners, be on the lookout for your copy of *Making a Monster* by Al Taylor and Sue Roy, it's now in the mail. Everybody else—better luck next time!

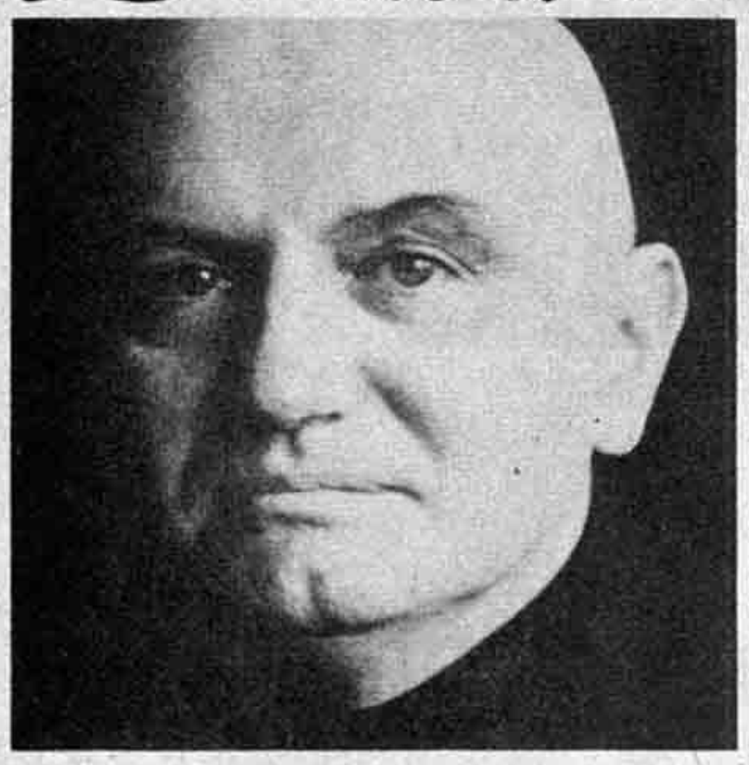
PHOENIX 2772: The new feature-length animated adventure by Dr. Osamu Tezuka, the Japanese creator of *Astro Boy*, was previewed in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles as part of a lecture tour by Tezuka, sponsored by the Japan Foundation.

The film, which premiered March 8 in Japan, is being distributed there by Toho, Ltd. *Phoenix 2772* is best described as a spectacular and somewhat cluttered attempt to pack the excitement of *Star Wars*, the profundity of *2001* and the whimsy of Disney into a single space opera—which also includes overt visual references to *Apocalypse Now* and *ALIEN*. In a sterile and overmechanized future, a test-tube baby is raised by the government to serve as a lower-echelon space pilot. He is assigned to track down and destroy an unknown space creature (code-named "Cosmozoa 2772") which has been destroying Earth vessels in a remote part of the galaxy. Sub-plots involve a loving female android, some "cute" Disneyish aliens (which seem more like cybernetic plush toys than living creatures) and the impending ecological doom of Earth. The main action is in the running space battle between the young hunter, Godo, and the villain—a shape-changer that usually resembles a Death Star-sized, space-born Id Monster. *Phoenix* is somewhat flawed by a surprise ending which is adequately explained but seems too abrupt a change in the story's flow.

The print shown, in Japanese with English subtitles, was 90 minutes long. Dr. Tezuka said that the Japanese theatrical version is 130 minutes, and apologized for the rush job in getting this incomplete version ready in time for his American tour. No plans for U.S. distribution have yet been made; meanwhile, Tezuka is already hard at work preparing a full-color remake of the *Astro Boy* series for Japanese TV.



MOTHER'S DAY: We don't know how this one escaped our notice! Already in release in some parts of the country, *Mother's Day* concerns a mother and her two sons who constitute a team of terror when they abduct three beautiful young women. Director-writer-producer Charles Kaufman claims that it's based on an actual experience.



In publishing, there is something called "generic fiction"—Gothics, Westerns, science fiction, horror, anything that can be pigeonholed—and then there is "the mainstream"—usually slice-of-life novels detailing the anxiety-ridden lives of the "typical" American. The fence that divides these two is largely artificial; created by publishers to make it easier to sell their "product." There are some writers, however, whose work cannot be so easily classified. Kurt Vonnegut, for instance, infuses all of his works with elements of science fiction and/or fantasy. Because his publishers realized that Vonnegut's work had an appeal that went far beyond the ranks of SF fandom, years ago Vonnegut was re-labelled as a bona fide member of the mainstream. Bookstores all over the country moved *Sirens of Titan* and *Player Piano* from the SF racks in the far left corner of the store to somewhere the "grown-ups" could see them.

Thomas Berger is another writer beyond category. Early in his career, he was well established as a mainstream writer with a trio of novels, *The Reinheart Trilogy*, concerning life in post-war, middle-class America. While Berger's "mainstream" label remains firmly attached, he has, since *Reinheart*, made several adventurous forays into Western adventure *(Little Big Man)*, SF *(Regiment of Women)*, psychological crime *(Killing Time)* and detective fiction *(Who Killed Teddy Villanova?)*. His most recent novel, *Neighbors*, starts as another "mainstream" tale of suburban life, but quickly takes a sharp turn for the bizarre.

We've long admired Berger's work, so we were particularly pleased to hear that his retelling of the legend of King Arthur, *Arthur Rex*, was optioned for a TV miniseries to be produced by Martin Poll Productions. Hoping to have some early coverage of the forthcoming television spectacular, we wrote to Berger with a brief list of questions. What follows is the full text of his reply.

"Dear Mr. Martin:

"Whether any of your readers will have any interest whatever in the following is, of course, another matter, but thank you for writing to me.

"Alas, preparations are underway for an Arthurian TV spectacle, but I don't think the producers intend to use my version: indeed, I expect to get a bit of money for supplying them with a quitclaim. But no doubt any kind of TV show on the theme will sell copies of all the Arthurian books. I am disappointed. It was only after the movie appeared, six years later, that *Little Big Man* began to sell!

"You might send me a copy of FANGORIA, which I can't identify from the subtitle, 'Monsters, Aliens, Bizarre Creatures'—isn't that merely to name the routine sidewalk traffic in midtown?"

Do you think of Arthur Rex *as fantasy?*

"I suppose I don't, or at any rate, I haven't thought of it as such, but there's no reason why someone else couldn't."

What motivated you to write it? Did you use any particular point-of-view to transform the Arthurian legend?

"I was always fascinated with the Arthurian legends as a boy. No, I was not conscious of using any special viewpoint. I was simply retelling the basic tales and adding some things that earlier writers had sometimes omitted. The sissy Arthurians, beginning with Tennyson, ignore sexual matters or play coy with them."

Your characters often lead lives of glorified mediocrity, and some of your novels seem to find a certain glory in mediocrity itself. Do you consider this an accurate statement? How do you account for this world-view?

"That's an unusually accurate statement! Perhaps this is because I have found that a good many of the glorious are mediocrities, on the one hand, while on the other, I am often thrilled to find something priceless among the routine. Beyond this, there is the challenge of making glorious works of art from lackluster material.

Was there any particular fiction or film genre that captivated you as a child? If so, what writers or films, and how do you feel about that category now?

"I liked Westerns as a child. I don't think I ever saw a horror film until I had grown up. My mother wouldn't let me see one when I was very young! Later on I filled in the gaps by seeing the classics of Karloff and Lugosi, et al. To be brutally frank, of all genres, SF has interested me the least throughout my life—with the exception of Jules Verne, whom I think I like because his vision of the things to come is so far in the past. No doubt, I'd like the SF of today were I to read it in 2080."

To questions regarding the adaptation of Arthur Rex:

"The indications are that *Arthur Rex* won't be done at all on TV."

What is your opinion of the trend toward SF and fantasy and the sort of film and television "product" that has resulted?

"This trend is as good as any. What mat-

(continued on page 66)

SCARE US!

Only two winners this issue, but both of these are dazzling displays of reader talent! Paul Sanchez offers his own captions for these makeups created by himself and cohorts at Fright Features, Inc., of Boulder City, Nevada. Lower left: No, this is *not* the Phantom of the Opera! Upper left: A refugee from *Dawn of the Dead*. Upper right: Recently retired from the bomb squad. Lower right: That's me! (Count Fangor is *still* screaming from that last one!)

Several readers polls literally *begged* us *never* to publish any reader poetry. We would agree, in principle; bad poems outnumber good poems by about 1,000 to 1, in our experience. But we had to make an exception for the following, and we think most poetry-haters will approve. It's called—

The Prank Caller

At three in the morning
He answered the phone.
The eerie voice speaking
Emitted a groan.

"A body! A body!"
The voice cried in vain,
"Out on your lawn
In the cold pouring rain."

A morning search showed
No sign of the dead.
" 'Twas a prank call indeed,"
The angered man said.

The phone rang again
The next morning at three,
The same eerie caller,
The same eerie plea;

"A body! A body!"
The voice cried in vain,
"Out on your lawn
In the cold pouring rain."

"Now look here," he said
"This calling must cease!
If it happens again
I shall phone the police!"

For days it continued,
Each morning at three,
The eerie voice groaning
That same eerie plea;

"A body! A body!"
The voice cried in vain,
"Out on your lawn
In the cold pouring rain."

The ninth time it happened
The man went insane,
He threw down the phone
And ran out in the rain.

Across the green lawn,
Out into the road,
Shouting and screaming
In the wet morning cold.

"There's no body here!
Now leave me alone!
Stay out of my life
And stay off of my phone!"

Around the dark corner
The speeding car came.
It flew out of nowhere
And went just the same.

It shattered his bones
With thrift and with flair.
It hurled his limp body
High into the air.

In the silence of dawn
He lay in the rain,
Ready to die,
Writhing in pain.

He could hear someone speaking;
He remembered the phone.
From inside the house
He heard someone groan;

"A body! A body!"
The voice cried in vain,
"Out on your lawn
In the cold pouring rain."

—Ken Stroebel
Merril, MI

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(continued from page 64)
ters is how each individual show is written, directed, acted, designed and produced. Speaking generally, at the moment, the "product" is as good or as bad as those in other genres: it would seem that as yet this era is not one of the golden times in television."

You play with the conventions of various generic fictions in your work. Is there some purpose to this playfulness?

"Yes. To do the same thing endlessly, to write the same book again and again, would suffocate me with boredom. I write to entertain myself."

Is there an ideal question that interviewers invariably fail to ask? What's the answer?

"Indeed there is! You've asked it, and with the first sentence I've answered it. The truth is that almost all interviewers who have dealt with me have concluded by asking whether I'd like to say something they neglected to ask for, that is, they have to a man or woman been unfailingly gracious. But, in fact, I lack in what would seem the typical human urge to tell one's own story to an audience of persons unknown to me. I'd rather invent something. So: Why doesn't anyone ever ask me how I worked my way through college by selling Bibles door-to-door on Jupiter, where furthermore, most of the inhabitants are irreligious illiterates and usually too drunk to answer the doorbell—?"

What is your next book? Do you have any projects in mind that may gain the interest of fans of horror/fantasy/science fiction?

"A book of mine entitled *Neighbors* will be published in a few weeks. *[It's now in bookstores everywhere, folks].* It is not devoid of elements of fantasy: the hero often doubts whether the couple who've moved in next door are real or invented by his desperation. In fact, I have often thought of writing something in the purer vein of fantasy, perhaps partaking of the supernatural, and once in a while I've tried it, but aside from a Jekyll-Hyde story published in (I think) 1961 in *Playboy*, I have never realized my aim. But who knows? I love the Jekyll-Hyde theme, and though I've seldom read ghost stories that I really like (apart from those of Henry James), I should like to write one."

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THINGS
to Come

We're so excited as we write this, that our fingers keep trembling, and our typewriter keeps falling on the floor! Because next issue features our second interview with the editor's favorite filmmaker, David Cronenberg! Cronenberg's *Scanners*, from all reports, appears to be his best ever—so be here for full coverage! Also for release in January is *Funhouse*, directed by Tobe Hooper and featuring makeup effects by Rick Backer. As we write this, Hooper is in London, making plans for yet another shock epic, but we plan to track the man down and *make* him talk—about *Funhouse* and the other Hooper classics, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Eaten Alive* and TV's *'Salem's Lot!* The living master of makeup prosthetics, Dick Smith, has fresh work appearing in Cronenberg's *Scanners*, and in *Altered States*, due for release this winter. We've put one of our hardest-working freelancers on the case—see the results next issue! Finally, there's *Dead and Buried*, scripted by *ALIEN* writers Dan O'Bannon and Ron Schussett, produced by Schussett and directed by Gary Sherman. There's some question of whether the film will be ready for a January release, but if it is, the full story will appear right here! And that's just the new stuff! Looks like the best issue ever of FANGORIA is on its way—so BE HERE!

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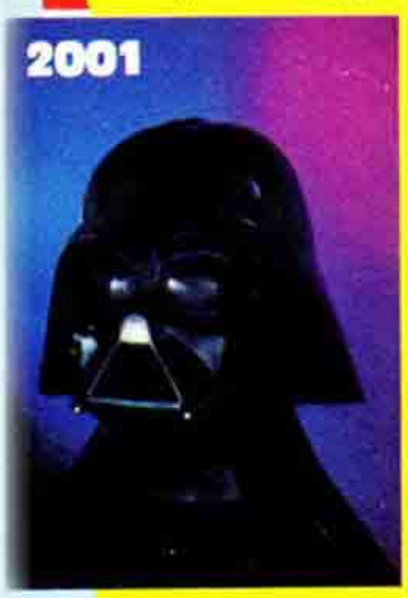

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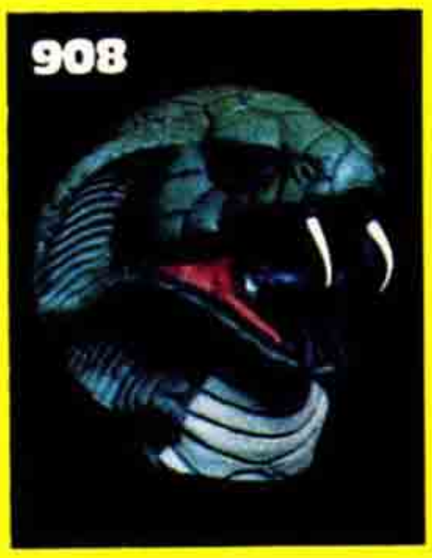

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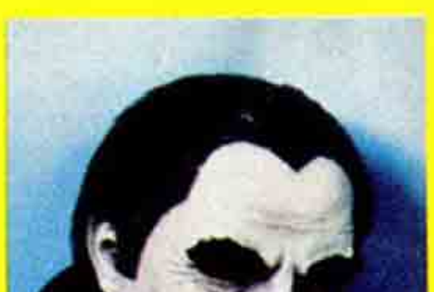

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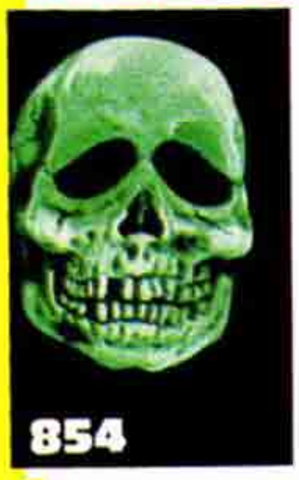

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